

GIFTING this
WONDERFUL
WORLD with
BLESSINGS!

14

Crimson
Demon's
Trial



Kono Subarashii Sekai ni Shukufuku o!

— God's Blessing on This Wonderful World! —

**- Volume 14 -
Crimson Demon's Trial**

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MEGUMIN

WHEN I SEE
YOU RISKING
YOUR LIFE FOR
SOMEONE
OTHER THAN
ME, I FEEL
REALLY
JEALOUS FOR
SOME REASON.

AQUA

I'VE BEEN
THINKING OF
SPECIAL POSES
AND WAYS TO
NAME MYSELF
LAST NIGHT, SO
I DIDN'T GET
MUCH SLEEP.

DARKNESS

NO MORE
CRIMSON DEMON
TRIALS...

LET'S JUST GIVE UP
ON BEING THE CHIEF.

I'LL HELP YOU THINK
OF A NEW WAY TO
INTRODUCE YOURSELF.

KAZUMA

I DON'T HAVE ANY TRAITS
OR SKILLS THAT STAND
OUT OR ANY SPECIAL
AMBITIONS,

SO IT'S A PROBLEM WHEN
I INTRODUCE MYSELF AS
A CRIMSON DEMON...

YUNYUN



SUMMER VACATION!



SUMMER VACATION

GIFTING this WONDERFUL WORLD with BLESSINGS! 14

Crimson
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Prologue

“Hey, are you guys done with your preparations!? You properly maintained your equipment, right!?”

“Aah, my armour is really glittering after all that polish! My beloved greatsword too has been sharpened to a fine edge, so expect great things from me!”

As we were gathering outside the mansion, Darkness, clad in equipment that has been polished to the point where it looked brand new, excitedly replied.

Even as I was looking over everyone’s equipment, I didn’t slack off myself.

In addition to my usual equipment, my bag was also stuffed full of various expensive magic items and scrolls.

“Say, Darkness, maybe you should give up on fighting with a sword and just use your fists instead.”

“Well, then, if you’re going to say that, maybe I shall start making use of my fists right now. Come over here, Aqua.”

Bearing a backpack just like me, Aqua ran away as soon as she heard Darkness’s words.

In direct contrast to us, who have been extremely excited since morning, Megumin bore the bare minimum of equipment as she joined us.

“...Why’s everyone so motivated? In the first place, there are stores in the Crimson Demon village, so I don’t think there’s any need to bring so much stuff with us...”

“What are you saying!? It’s a trial, you know!? A trial! One that can challenge even the tribe of elite mages, the Crimson Demons! No matter how much preparations we make, it will never be enough!”

Hearing my words, Megumin returned a bewildered look-

Chapter 1

Divine Punishment upon this Holy Armour!

Part 1

Just the other day, a candidate for the position of a Demon King's general, the boyband-esque fallen angel, Duke, was defeated.

As a result, the heartbroken Wiz cooped herself up inside her shop. Since then, Aqua went to console her almost every day.

Today was no different.

As we were making our way back from the magic item shop, we ran into Yunyun, who was waiting outside our mansion with a basket of gifts in her hand.

"Can you please stop blaming others for you failing the trial!?"

"Then just whose fault could it be!? I told you not to use Explosion, so why!? Why must you fire it off at the worst possible place!?"

I invited Yunyun inside and tried to ask for more details, but...

"Now, now, calm down, Yunyun. It's unreasonable to expect a girl like her who lives like an exploding firework not to use Explosion magic. I mean, it'd be like expecting Axis Cultists to act mature and reserved. It's just not possible."

"W-When you put it that way, it feels like I'm the one who was in the wrong..."

"Kazuma, that example is being rude to Axis Cultists. My children are a little free-spirited, but they aren't as bad as Megumin."

"Right, come at me, all three of you! I'll show you what happens when a Crimson Demon gets serious!"

— It seems that the Crimson Demon Village is currently holding a trial to determine who will become their next chief.

And Yunyun was currently running for that position.

The very same Yunyun who's been introducing herself as the future chief of the Crimson Demons for as long as I can remember.

She went back to the Crimson Demon Village and undertook the trial, but...

"A single person can only undertake the trial three times, so after failing it twice, this is your last chance, right? I've actually heard about this trial before. The Dustiness house has dealt extensively with the Crimson Demon Village. The beloved armour that my house uses is a high-quality product made by the Crimson Demons."

Darkness, who was listening attentively while sipping a cup of tea, summarized.

Placing her cup down on the table, she continued.

"The Crimson Demon's Trial is designed to be undertaken by a team consisting of a strong vanguard and a Crimson Demon as a rearguard, or so I've heard... This must be some kind of fate. Megumin is already like family to me, so I'll take care of her messes. Leave the vanguard position to me!"

"R-Really!? I'll be able to rest easy if someone capable of using Decoy like you is my vanguard! P-Please lend me your strength!"

Yunyun broke out into a bright smile after hearing those words, to which Darkness returned with a gentle smile before raising her cup to her lips...

"Darkness, you're just looking forward to having a chance to shine after all this time, aren't you? I mean, all you did back during Wiz's incident was seduce that guy."

"Bluh!"

Darkness spat out her tea in response to my prodding.

Still...

"Say, would it be really problematic for you if you didn't become chief? Like, your

family has been the chief for generations, so if you fail this trial, they'll disown you or something...? Becoming the chief means being the best amongst the Crimson Demons, so I guess competition would be pretty fierce..."

Ignoring the angry gaze Darkness was shooting towards me, I asked Yunyun who was looking down at her feet, but...

"No, if I have to say, most of the Crimson Demons are pretty ambivalent about the position of chief. The position ties them down and comes with a lot of responsibilities, so..."

Raising her head up, with a very serious expression on her face, she continued,

"I don't have any traits or skills that stand out or any other special ambitions, so it'll a problem when I introduce myself as a Crimson Demon..."

"Let's just give up on being the chief. We'll help you think of a new way to introduce yourself."

"As expected of Kazuma! We'll have this solved in five minutes!"

Hearing the exchange between Aqua and me, Yunyun frantically stood up.

"Please wait, you've got it wrong! That's not all there is to it! The Crimson Demons are pretty free-spirited, so who knows what will happen if there isn't a chief... but, as I just said, there isn't anyone else other than me who wants to be chief badly enough to undertake the troublesome trial..."

True, it feels like they'd cause all kinds of chaos if the Crimson Demons were to be left to their own devices.

Yunyun always was pretty grounded and serious. In fact, her disposition is almost like a class rep, so if she became chief...

Just then, Megumin, who had been playing with Chomusuke on her lap, said.

"I guess there's no choice. In that case, I shall become the chief-"

"You can't even use advanced magic! Plus, becoming the chief means you have to go back to the village, you know!? If you're only saying this because you think the title of

chief sounds really cool, I'll get angry!"

Apparently, knowing advanced magic is the minimum requirement to become the chief of the Crimson Demons.

"Now now, calm down you two. At the end of the day, Yunyun just needs a strong partner, right? In that case, leave it to me. I'll show you why everyone runs to me whenever there's a crisis!"

Megumin and the others seemed taken aback by my words.

"W-What's wrong? Normally, Kazuma would think of this as a chore, so why are you so agreeable today?"

Megumin voiced the opinions of everyone present. Following her, Darkness, seemingly having made some kind of connection, slammed her fist against her palm.

"Oh, I know, it's because there are a lot of beautiful girls in the Crimson Demon Village!"

"Oh, does the slutty lady with extensive knowledge of seduction techniques think I'm some kind of raging beast or something? I think I've been looked down upon lately. Maybe I'll take this chance to remind you of what I can do."

Seeing me wriggle my fingers in her direction, Darkness raised her fists with a frown but also sort of not...

"Oh, I get it now! Kazuma's name just appeared in the newspaper a few days ago, so you intend to hole up in the Crimson Demon Village until the heat dies down, right? That Duke fellow came here to challenge Wiz after all, so I'm sure he's worried that he might be the target of some adventurers too!"

And Aqua perfectly revealed my thought process with a shit-eating grin.

Just why is she only this sharp at times like this?

"T-That's not it! Unlike the three of you who do nothing but cause trouble for me every day, Yunyun is an important friend of mine who has common sense. Of course I'd help her if she's in trouble!"

“Wait, I think the amount of trouble we create has really gone down recently... Why are you blushing, Yunyun!? This man is just saying some superficial compliments like he usually does! You’re being way too easy right now!”

Yunyun probably latched onto to the ‘important’ and ‘friend’ bits from my speech.

“Hey, Kazuma, do you seriously intend on becoming Yunyun’s partner? The Crimson Demon Village is surrounded by nothing but strong monsters, you know? I can serve as a meatshield even if I can’t land my attacks, but you...”

“Yeah, the weak Kazuma-san would be eaten up by the monsters over there. Why don’t you stay and watch the house together with me? Let Darkness have her turn in the spotlight for once. She hasn’t really stood out much recently. There might be more follow-up interviews from the newspapers, so I kinda feel sorry to have her most recent achievement be seducing... Ouch! Hey, Darkness, I was supporting you, so why did you hit me- Ah, stop! Stop!!”

Hearing the two of them say that gave me second thoughts.

W-Well, now that I think about it, there probably wouldn’t be any adventurers who are free enough to come to this town of beginners just to challenge me...

Just when I thought that, as Darkness was driving her knuckles into Aqua’s temples, the doorbell rang, and the front door opened.

“Is Satou Kazuma-san here?”

The person standing there was one of the ladies from the guild.

“Um, a high level adventurer who travelled here from the Capital is requesting a meeting with Satou-san. If you have the time, could you join us at the guild?”

“Sorry, I’m heading over to the Crimson Demon Village right now to help an important friend of mine. I probably won’t be back for a while, so please have them come again another day.”

Everyone turned to face me after my instantaneous reply.

“Ka-Kazuma-san...!”

Ignoring Yunyun's touched voice, I smiled at the guild lady and continued.

"So, tell this to that adventurer... 'Satou Kazuma has left on gruelling journey for the sake of a friend. He might not make it back alive, so forget about him and go on ahead to fight the Demon King... '"

"S-Satou-san..."

Perhaps she was influenced by the atmosphere, but the guild lady's voice seemed full of admiration as well.

I didn't expect to suddenly head off on a journey like this, but this is way preferable than duelling a high level adventurer from the Capital.

If I leave in a cool way right now, and come back after everything's died down...

Just then, the guild lady said to me with sparkling eyes-

"I got it! I'll be sure to relay that to the beautiful adventurer who claimed to be a fan of Satou-san!"

"Eh?"

Part 2

The next morning.

"Is Yunyun not here yet!? I'm all done with my preparations here! We'll blow through the Crimson Demon's Trial in a single day!"

I already finished my preparations last night, so I was just impatiently waiting for everyone else to get ready.

It was quite early in the morning, and the sun has yet to fully rise.

"I can't wait, Kazuma. Protecting the backline is the job of a knight, so leave the trial to me!"

Standing next to me, and as restless as I was, Darkness excitedly said to me.

“I refuse. After all, there’s a beautiful female adventurer waiting for my return. How can I not take this chance to show off?”

“D-Don’t get in my way for such a foolish reason! Come on, Kazuma, give me a chance at the spotlight too! This isn’t like you at all. Why didn’t you go meet up with that fan of yours yesterday?”

Darkness grabbed me by the shoulders and started shaking me. It seems like she really wanted a chance to shine as an adventurer, but...

“If I were to meet up with a fan on the very same day they asked, that’ll make me seem desperate and lame, wouldn’t it? It’d be best to resolve Yunyun’s issues first, then walk back into the guild saying something like ‘Well, well, this incident wasn’t that big of a deal after all... ’ in a loud voice. Afterwards, I’d naturally run into the fan and everything will progress naturally.”

“W-What’s with that elaborate act? Your everyday behaviour couldn’t be any more slobbish, yet you care so much about this...”

Darkness exasperatedly said, but she can say whatever she wants.

“I need to bring back some tales for my fan, so I’m going to get a lot of accomplishments this time. You can just stay here and watch over the house.”

“N-Not a chance! The Crimson Demon’s Trial is modelled after a famous legend and requires a vanguard and rearguard working together to overcome many challenges. My admiration for that legend is what set me on the path to become an adventurer! Come on, Kazuma, chances like these rarely come by, so please grant me this!”

In the face of Darkness’s stubborn pleading, I couldn’t help but retort.

“What really set you on the path to become an adventurer is something far more perverted! Don’t think you can get away with lying now! I want to play at being a hero too!”

“T-That isn’t a lie! I won’t deny that I had my eyes set on something less upright when I became an adventurer, but I really did start admiring adventurers as a child because of those legends! And you said you wanted to play at being a hero, right!? Don’t get in

my way with such a cheap motive!”

An exasperated voice called out to the both of us as we started fighting with each other.

“Do you two really want to play hero and mage so badly? I’ll play with you however long you want when you get back from the Crimson Demon Village, so behave yourself for now.”

Standing at the entrance was a sleepy looking, and lightly equipped, Megumin.

There’s a reason why Darkness and I were so obstinate about this issue.

One of the legends in this world is the tale where a girl and a guy work together to overcome numerous challenges, eventually ending with the girl becoming the queen of a country.

The twin leads of that story are the brave female mage and the taciturn male knight.

After overcoming all manner of hardships together with the male knight, the girl eventually achieved her dream of becoming a queen and wedded the knight. It’s a classic, happy story.

And it seems like the Crimson Demon’s Trial was modeled after that legend.

Still...

“Protecting Megumin doesn’t quite, how do I put it, it doesn’t have the same feeling...”

“Y-Yeah, rather than recreating a legend, it feels more like heading out on a pleasant trip...”

“Fine, then instead of playing the role of the princess, I’ll play the role of the last boss! I’ll be the evil magician that appears at the end of the first book! Now, bring it on!”

Just as Megumin started indignantly waving her staff around, a carefree, singsong voice wafted over from the yard.

Looking over, I saw Aqua watering the fields with magically conjured water.

“We’ll be going on a journey for a while, so maybe we should get someone to water the

fields? Wiz is already taking care of Chomusuke and Zell, so maybe we should get her to water the fields too...”

The words died in my mouth as my gaze fell upon what was in that field.

The plant that Aqua was cheerfully watering is a seedling that resembled a palm-sized girl.

Yes, it’s the Tranquility Girl.

“Oh, yeah, I completely forgot about it with everything that’s happened, but that thing was planted on our field! Hey, Darkness, Megumin, restrain Aqua for a while, I’ll take care of this thing before we head off!”



“Wait, what are you saying!? I won’t let you do that, you cold-blooded NEET! It’s fine, if I water her with divine water provided by a goddess, she’ll definitely grow up to be a good girl!”

As I stepped closer to finish it off, Aqua hugged the Tranquility Girl protectively as she tried to appeal to me.

“No way! We don’t need another pet at our house! We already have our hands full taking care of Chomusuke and Zell and Aqua, we can’t have yet another one!”

“Please, I’m begging you! I’ll properly water her every day and take her for walks... Wait, did you just say my name as well?”

The Tranquility Girl was probably too young to understand our words yet. She cheerfully beamed at me.

...Do I really have to kill this girl?

“H-Hey, Darkness, isn’t ensuring the safety of the town the duty of the nobles? You wanted your turn at the spotlight, so I’ll let you take this.”

“N-No, you have the lowest level out of all of us despite being our leader of sorts, so you should have this.”

.....

“Don’t get attached to her just because you’ve been watering it with Aqua for a few days! Hey come on, Lady Dustiness, protect this town from monsters!”

“You sure love to shoot your mouth off. Fine, since you’re involved with this as well, here’s an order from your Lord. Take care of this Tranquility Girl... T-Tranquility Girl...”

Possibly thinking that she’s playing with her, the Tranquility Girl laughed as Darkness jabbed her finger in her direction.

Seeing that, Darkness visibly deflated.

“...How about replanting it somewhere deep in the Crimson Demon Forest where people don’t go...”

— It was almost time for us to meet up with Yunyun.

All the pets of our house apart from Aqua have been entrusted to Wiz, so we're ready to leave at any time.

"Now all that's left is to wait for Yunyun to show up. Knowing her, I expected that she'd show up a few hours early or something, but..."

"No, she'll show up right at the appointed time. There was a time back in the Crimson Demon Village where she was invited by her friends to play, and ended being so excited for it that she showed up half a day early. She was later advised that coming off this strongly will scare off her friends."

That's being way too excited.

Then, as the bell that signified our meeting time rung, a magic circle glowed brightly in front of the mansion, and Yunyun stepped out of it.

"Yeah it's the exact time we agreed to meet, but appearing just in time isn't charming either!"

"E-Eh? Why are you angry at me even though I've just arrived!?"

Seems like Yunyun used Teleport to arrive.

As she was being scolded by Megumin, she looked around the area...

"Good morning, everyone. Please treat me... Eh, u-um, the thing Aqua-san is holding is..."

"This girl is the one who will eventually become the chief of the Crimson Demon Forest, Deadscream Bloody Mary. She's moving to a place close to your hometown, so please treat her well."

Looking at the potted Tranquility Girl that Aqua was holding, Yunyun leaned in for a closer look.

"That's a Tranquility Girl, right? That name sounds like an alias, so I would like to give it a different one if possible... Come to think of it, the villagers often tell me never to get close to a Tranquility Girl for some reason..."

“Tranquility Girls are like the natural enemies of loners. Don’t let your guard down just because it’s small, okay?”

Perhaps gaining some understanding of what kind of monster a Tranquility Girl is, Yunyun smiled with expectations for a brief moment before hastily shaking her head.

“Now then, everyone, let’s be on our way. Teleport-”

A magic circle engulfed all of us and carried us off to the Crimson Demon Village-

Part 3

The Crimson Demon Village.

This is the village burdened with the responsibility of monitoring the Demon King’s castle, and spends day and night making a large variety of magic items.

“E-Eh? Yunyun? Megumin!?”

It’s the gathering spot for the world’s strongest mages, and could be said to be humanity’s greatest concentration of combat power...

“Oh crap! Megumin and Yunyun brought in outsiders! Everyone, hurry up and change!”

.....

“Wait a minute! I had to throw my Crimson Demon robe out because it got eaten by bugs! I need to buy one right away!”

“Hey, lend me that broom! I need a staff!”

“Cloak! Where’s my black cloak!? Ahh, Mom, where did you put my cloak!?”

The Crimson Demons erupted into a frenzy after we suddenly appeared in the middle of the village.

The two Crimson Demons who were watching over the entrance called out to us.

“Hey, you two, you should tell us in advance if you’re going to bring someone from outside the village with you!”

“Yeah, yeah! Everyone’s in a panic thanks to you! It’s fine if you’re walking here, but you gotta give us some advance notice if you’re arriving by teleport!”

I think I’ve seen those two somewhere before. If I recall, they are Megumin’s classmates...

“Oh, if it isn’t my classmates Sakiberi and Nerimaki. It’s been some time.”

“It’s Funifura and Dodonko! Nerimaki isn’t even here! We properly named ourselves back in Axel recently, didn’t we!?”

Yeah, it’s that pair of girls, Funifura and Dodonko.

Clad in the robes that seemed to be like a uniform for the Crimson Demons, the two of them ran up and stood in front of us as if to hide the general panic that the rest of the Crimson Demons have fallen into.

“Yo, it’s been some time. Say, if you don’t mind me asking, why is everyone in the village in such a panic?”

I greeted them and asked.

“Visitors would be really disappointed if they were to visit a village of mages only to find everyone clad in normal clothes, right? Normally, the patrolling NEETs would come and inform us of any approaching visitors, but...”

“Yeah, it’s really troubling when you suddenly teleport in like this.”

“You don’t have to change for visiting tourists like us, put that effort towards fighting the Demon King’s Army instead.”

As we were talking, the Crimson Demons who rushed back to their homes a while ago started walking around the streets again, now clad in black robes.

They tried to act as naturally as they could as they went about their business, though it’s a little irritating how they kept glancing at us out of the corners of their eye.

Just then, Aqua excitedly pointed at one of the Crimson Demons who was stirring a large cauldron in front of her house.

“Look, Kazuma! A mage is stirring a mysterious cauldron!”

Seeing a black-robed mage stirring a cauldron like that really makes you think that she must be making some kind of dangerous potion...

“Outsider young lady, it’s best to keep your distance... What I’m making right now is the forbidden...”

“It’s curry! She’s making curry, Kazuma! I can smell it from here!”

The Crimson Demon awkwardly averted her gaze at Aqua’s declaration.

“Kazuma, that girl is drawing some kind of magic circle. It seems like she’s preparing for some kind of ritual...”

Directed by Darkness’s words, I looked over to see a young Crimson Demon lady writing something on the ground while muttering to herself.

As we continued observing from afar, the magic circle slowly started glowing and flickering.

Seeing that, Aqua moved closer with interest...

“You over there, it’s dangerous to get too close! I’m about to start a forbidden ritual to break the seal of a powerful devil that’s been sealed here since ancient times... Magic has already started leaking from this magic circle. Don’t worry about me and just go. This is but a regular occurrence for us Crimson Demons. Vanquishing a simple ancient devil would be a piece of cake-”

Saying that, the lady flashed us a fleeting smile before raising her hands in a determined manner.

This village had dangerous things like evil gods and goddesses and giant weapons sealed away here in the past, but they even have something as dangerous as an ancient demon-

“Leave devils to me! With the high level Archpriest Aqua-san here, I’ll blast him away

the moment he appears!”

After hearing the lady’s warning, Aqua shouted such dependable lines and jumped out.

After a short wait, she started sniffing the air.

“...This is strange, I can’t sense any sinister magic in the air at all. There isn’t any of that stench that comes with devils either, so maybe he isn’t coming out anytime soon? Ah, but it’s fine, I’m really free right now! If it’s to vanquish a devil, I’ll wait here for an entire day!”

Saying that, she sat down as if to watch over the circle.

Looking at Aqua sit down with the Tranquility Girl seedling by her side, the Crimson Demon lady started breaking out in cold sweat for some reason.

“Say, Megumin, doesn’t that lady seem a little troubled?”

“Oh, is that Socketto? I was wondering what she was doing... That magic circle is just an attraction for tourists. All it does is glow and sparkle. It’s probably the first time Socketto has seen someone react like Aqua, so I’m sure she is quite troubled.”

Why is everyone here shot in the head?

Eventually, the lady shook her head in an exaggerated manner.

“...Damn, this devil started fiercely resisting all of a sudden. It seems like he’s scared by your presence. Unfortunately, I don’t have enough mana to break through the seal... But, well, this is fine too. Thank you. The village is saved thanks to you...”

“Don’t worry, leave it to me! Hey, Kazuma, transfer my mana to this lady! If it’s for dragging a devil out here, I’ll give you as much of my divine mana as you need!”

The lady’s face suddenly stiffened.

“Right, leave it to me! If it’s to vanquish a devil, I’ll happily lend a hand!”

“As expected of Kazuma, you catch on fast! Don’t worry, my mana is inexhaustible, so you can take as much as you want!”

“Soketto-san is about to cry, so please stop!”

Part 4

After we were done teasing that lady, we parted with Yunyun and made our way to Megumin’s house.

Walking beside me, Megumin sighed as she said.

“...Seriously. That cool and strong-willed Soketto ended up almost being driven to tears. She’s the Crimson Demon’s best fortune teller. If you tease her too much, she’ll start spreading stuff about you that you don’t want revealed.”

“Sorry, she looked really pretty, so I just... Anyway, what do you mean by that? After all this time, there’s nothing I particularly need to hide, so threats like that won’t work.”

We’ve formed a really strong bond after knowing each other for so long.

After all that, there isn’t really any secrets I’d want to keep from my companions...

“Back when a NEET named Bukkoroli made her angry, she revealed stuff like when he usually takes a bath or uses the toilet, his past embarrassing incidents and fetishes, and even what he gets up to at night, and caused him to coop himself in his room for quite some time.”

“I’ll definitely apologize when I see her again.”

After my immediate response, I once again took in the sights of the Crimson Demon Village.

It seems like a peaceful village you’d see anywhere else at first glance, but there are quite a few differences that set it apart from a regular village.

Take, for instance, one of the houses that Darkness took an interest in as she passed by.

“S-Say, Megumin, what is that person doing? He seems to be directing that golem to attack a rotating pot, is that some kind of ritual or something?”

“That person is the best potter amongst the Crimson Demons. He’s rotating that pot using clay magic and shaping it with that golem. He doesn’t use his hands because they’ll get dirty, so he uses the golem instead.”

I really want him to apologize to the potters of the world.

“Hey, hey, what are those people over there doing?”

Aqua was pointing to where a group of Crimson Demons, carrying baskets filled with clothes, were gathering.

“Tornado!”

A Crimson Demon that looked like a housewife chanted, and a large tornado sprung forth in front of her.

“Create Water!”

Next, the other housewives started spraying water towards the tornado.

Once the powerful magical tornado was filled with water and stabilized-

The housewives started throwing their clothes into it one after another.

“They’re just doing laundry.”

“You people are really great at using magic for frivolous purposes.”

Just as we said that, we arrived at the edge of the village...

“...Well, this should be the right spot, but...”

To Megumin’s bewilderment, what lay in front of us was a newly built house that was fairly large even compared to the other houses in the village.

It’s similar to, but at the same time wildly different from the house we stayed at in the past.

After standing dumbstruck for a while, Megumin hesitantly approached the house and rang the doorbell.

Shortly afterwards, the pitter patter of running feet could be heard from beyond the door, followed by a voice.

“Who’s there?”

“Fufu, who do you think it is?”

Megumin was probably trying to surprise her younger sister after suddenly returning and all.

As she put on a wide smile in front of the door, a loud click could be heard from beyond it.

It seems like the door has been locked.

“Our house might look impressive, but we have no money. Please go away.”

“It’s me! Your older sister Megumin! You can tell from my voice, right!? Please open up!”

The door opened slightly in response to Megumin’s desperate cries.

From the way she peeked out through the gap in the door, it seemed like she was still wary of us.

“...I don’t have an older sister. She died in an explosion.”

“What are you saying!? I’m well alive and here in front of you! Come on!”

Komekko slammed the door shut after confirming her sister’s presence.

“My nee-chan would show her face at home after coming back so many times...”

“Ah! N-No, umm, that’s... I came back to help Yunyun with her trial, not to play around, so... Komekko, are you sulking because I ignored you? I’ll play with you a lot tonight, so please cheer up.”

Megumin put on a mollifying smile as she said that, and Komekko...

"I don't really care about playing with nee-chan, I just wanted a souvenir."

"You don't actually mean that, right!? You're just saying that because you're pouting, right? It really hurts, so please stop!"

Sensing things at an impasse, I pulled out a gift from my backpack.

"Yo, Komekko, it's been some time. It's Kazuma onii-chan. Here, I'll give you a snack."

"Welcome home, Onii-chan."

"Komekko! You don't have a brother, only a sister! Please properly welcome me back!"

-After being welcomed into Megumin's house, we looked around the newly renovated house.

"Have some tea."

"Oh, my, thank you. You're a pretty thoughtful girl, aren't you, Komekko-chan?"

After receiving Komekko's warm reception, Aqua looked down at her with a gentle expression.

"Is this a present?"

"Komekko-chan, this girl isn't food or a gift. In the first place, you shouldn't eat any creature that looks this much like a human."

Komekko started drooling as she eyed the potted Tranquility Girl on the table.

"Now then, as the sister who's been sending back money every month, I would like to learn more about this newly built house."

"The old house went boom, so they built a new one."

Oh, yeah, come to think of it, they said something about Megumin's house getting destroyed before, right?

“I’ve heard about that before, but, be it the furniture or everything else about this house, they all feel like they are of far better quality than the stuff I’ve been using...”

Megumin had a complicated expression on her face as she said that.

Seeing that, Komekko, while stuffing the snacks I offered her into her mouth, said,

“Nee-chan’s a cheapskate.”

“Where did you learn such words!? It must be that damned NEET Bukkoroli, right!? I’ll definitely ask Mother and Father about this house when they get back!”

Part 5

That night.

“That’s how it is, so even though the house has been renovated, we are still broke! If you spare any thought for your mother at all, please don’t stop sending back the money!”

“I get it, so please stop pulling on my cloak! Everyone’s watching! It’s embarrassing, so please stop!”

After getting the story from her mother after she returned home, it came to light that her family took out a loan in order to rebuild the house.

“Well, it’s a good thing to have a bigger house. Ah, I’ll be in the village for a while, so Kazuma and the others will be staying here for a few days. Anyway, where’s my room?”

Megumin let out a tired sigh...

“...Eh? Umm, your room is...”

“Hey, hurry up and show your own flesh and blood daughter to her room. Otherwise I’ll stop sending money back to my cold-hearted parents.”

Yuiyui grabbed on even tighter after hearing that.

“You were living in such a gorgeous mansion, so I didn’t think you’d ever come back! There are several rooms free, so just take whichever room suits your fancy! I recommend the room at the back of the second floor! That room is wide and has thick walls, so you’ll be able to sleep together with Kazuma-san!”

“We’re obviously going to sleep in different rooms if you have the space! Don’t put your own daughter in the same room as a young man!”

Looking away from the indignant Megumin, Yuiyui affixed me with a serious gaze.

“Kazuma-san wants to have the same room as my daughter, right?”

“Of course, isn’t that obvious?”

“You’ll just make things more complicated, so please shut up!”

Megumin snapped at me after my instant answer.

“Hey, wait, didn’t you just ask me how many children I wanted the other day!?”

“That isn’t something to say in front of my parents! Anyway, that’s just talking about the future!”

Aqua beckoned Komekko away from us as we argued.

“You can’t listen to what those two are talking about, okay? I’ll fold some origami for Komekko-chan. Behold, Bomber Majin Moguninnin.”

“So cool!”

What the hell is a Bomber Majin? What’s a Moguninnin? That sounds really interesting.

As Aqua drew Komekko’s attention away, Darkness slowly started getting worked up.

“Megumin, you...! You keep calling me Erosader and Erolady and all that, but since when did you come up with a family plan!? You closet pervert!”

“H-How rude! Who is a closet pervert!? Argh, nevermind! Kazuma, let’s go! I haven’t done my daily routine yet. We’ll just find a place to let it off.”

Probably realizing that she'd be at a disadvantage if this were to drag on, Megumin grabbed my hand and tried to leave...

"Daily routine? Darkness-san, what exactly is my daughter's daily routine?"

"Megumin does something that drains her stamina to the point where she cannot move every day."

"Darkness, please don't put it in such an easily misunderstood way! That sounds like I'm doing something really obscene!"

Darkness probably still holds a grudge over being called Erosader or whatever, because...

"By the way, because of the loud noises she makes during her daily routine, it's become somewhat of a local spectacle in Axel. Recently, people have even come to watch..."

"Just what is my daughter doing in public!?"

"Explosion magic! I'm just shooting Explosion! Darkness, if you say any more misleading things to my mother, I'll really make you suffer later!"

To Megumin who was blushing bright red, Darkness put on a serious expression and,

"Don't think I'll be happy just because you say you'll make me suffer. I don't hate you, Megumin, but I don't think that sort of thing should be done between women."

"I didn't think about making you happy at all! Did the monsters knock something loose in your brain!? Enough of this, Kazuma, let's go... Huh? Kazuma?"

I activated my Lurk skill and snuck away before I could be dragged into anything troublesome.

Part 6

Let's leave Megumin's daily routine to Darkness.

Stepping out into the village at night, I found myself in front of a store that caught my

interest while I was walking around the village this afternoon.

Written on the flashy pink sign hanging above the entryway were the words “Succubus Lingerie Pub.”

There exist an actual Succubus service in Axel. It wouldn’t be too surprising for there to be such stores outside of Axel too.

What really caught my interest was the Lingerie part.

There are pubs known as lingerie pubs back in Japan that only serves adults.

From what I’ve heard, it’s a place where you can get ladies in their underwear to drink with you.

I can see lewd dreams whenever I want.

But I want to get fawned over in real life from time to time too.

After all, due to the dominance of the succubus service, Axel is mostly devoid of other stores that caters to adults.

They do say that what happens on a trip stays on the trip, after all. It’s fine to cut loose every once in a while.

To be honest, I don’t really mind being away from the succubus service out here.

After all, there are a lot of beautiful girls in the Crimson Demon Village.

I feel like there’d be some people who’d criticise me for doing this even though I have Megumin, but these types of stores don’t count.

I’m just drinking with an older lady, that’s all.

Having repeated that excuse to myself multiple times, I strengthened my resolve and opened the door-

“Oh, welcome, outsider. If you’re alone, will a counter seat be fine?”

Seeing nothing but men sitting inside, I instantly knew that I’ve been tricked.

Still, I held onto a small glimmer of hope as I moved to the counter.

“Umm, is this a regular pub?”

“Ah, the most intelligent Crimson Demon thought up the name for this pub and inn. Customers from outside the village all end up asking the same question.”

...The most intelligent Crimson Demon.

“Is that person also the same one who gave the name of “mixed hot springs” to the public bath that is neither mixed nor a hot spring?”

“I’m surprised you know that. That very same person thought up the names for most of the tourist attractions in this village too.”

I really wish these people would put that intelligence and useless uses of powerful magic towards fighting the Demon King’s Army instead.

Leaving right now would be the same as admitting that I was tricked by the name, so I’ll buy a drink before getting out of here.

As I was thinking that while sipping on beer that I ordered,

“Welcome, customer. My name is Nerimaki, daughter of the owner of the number one pub in the Crimson Demon Village, and the one who will eventually become its owner! Onii-san seems to be a friend of MeguYun, so I’ll give this to you as a special service. In exchange, would you please tell me how they are getting along in Axel?”

A girl with long, black hair placed a dish I didn’t recall ordering on the counter before sitting down next to me.

If she’s referring to Megumin and Yunyun at the same time like that, she’s probably one of their classmates or something.

She’s probably interested in how her classmates are doing outside the village.

In a voice loud enough for the surrounding Crimson Demons to hear, I started talking about the achievements of those two-

“W-What did you say!? That Yunyun has a male friend!? Go on! Tell me more about

what kind of people those two guy friends of hers are like!”

“One of them is a blonde delinquent. The other one could be said to have a devilish personality, or even a devil himself...”

At my words, Nerimaki shook her head and slammed on the table.

With this, Yunyun won’t be called a loner by the Crimson Demons.

I didn’t originally set out to do this, but I am looking forward to hearing Yunyun’s thanks in a few days.

“How could this happen? Where did the pure Yunyun who helped me work on my finishing pose go...! Those two always had a yuri-like air about them, so I’m sure they would’ve clung onto each other...!”



Nerimaki seemed to be deep in thought about something as she mumbled to herself, but I clinked the ice of my glass together and continued talking for the benefit of the others present.

“By the way, I’m currently building an adult relationship with Megumin. I don’t dislike seeing yuri, but it’s a loss for humanity for two beautiful girls to get together. I intend to put my all into fighting the loss of population caused by the Demon King’s army.”

“That sounds really cool and all, but at the end of the day you’re just talking about making children.”

The moment Nerimaki shot that towards me, the pub suddenly grew noisy.

As for why, well...

<“Bro!? Is that you, bro!?”>

The second floor was an inn, right?

The thing that came down the stairs is a boisterous set of full plate that I couldn’t forget even if I wanted to.

<“It’s me! The strongest, toughest, dancing and singing Divine Relic amongst Divine Relics! Your bro, Aigis-san!”>

The holy armour that was supposed to have been taken away by Eris was standing there.

Part 7

<“What a coincidence to run into you here, bro! Could this be fate!? We might have pretty good compatibility with each other! If Kazuma-chi ends up reborn as a beautiful girl, I might let you get inside me!”>

“Who the hell is Kazuma-chi? And don’t just call me bro.”

Sitting down next to me, Aigis pointed at Nerimaki and said.

<“Ojou-san, you probably can’t make any breast milk yet, so just give me some milk that’s the same temperature as your body.”>

“Armour-san really sexually harasses everyone every night, don’t you?”

Aigis is the same as ever.

<“Sexual harassment is a demonstration of affection, Ojou-san. You want to stick your finger inside me? It’s quite warm, you know?”>

“You know the Crimson Demons are the strongest, most combative group there is, right? Picking a fight with them... You’re really amazing. There really is a fine line between bravery and stupidity.”

Probably having already gotten used to it from dealing with drunken customers, Nerimaki disinterestedly stuck a finger into Aigis’s visor.

As I was looking at such a surreal scene,

“So, what are you doing here? Didn’t you get taken away by Eris-san?”

<“Oh, yeah, listen to this, Bro! She’s outrageous! She tried to give me to a swordmaster nii-chan! And yet another intolerable pretty boy too! He got mad when I teased the girls around him, so I ran away from home!”>

Having his own equipment run away... That guy doesn’t have it easy, huh?

“Well, I get that, but why did you come to the Crimson Demon Village of all places?”

<“...The Crimson Demon Village is surrounded by nothing but strong monsters. That’s right, I gave him a trial! One to determine if he truly is a man fit for me!”>

The Chief’s trial and now this one, why does everyone here like trials so much?

“Dear customer, didn’t you say ‘Ah, the Crimson Demon Village is full of beauties just like I heard! I’ll stay here from now on!’ the other day?”

<“Now now, Ojou-chan, don’t say such things in a conversation between gentlemen. Here’s for the milk. Keep the change.”>

Aigis handed over something to Nerimaki as she handed over the glass of milk to him.

“...Are those fragments of some sort?”

<“They are pieces of my shining body. I’m made of Orichalcum, after all. You can probably make enough to buy a castle by selling me... You two are kind of scaring me here, so can you please stop looking at me like that?”>

Well, he’s a Divine Relic, after all.

He’d be easily worth more than a castle.

<“Your face is too close, bro. Here’s the body temperature milk that this ojou-chan just brought me. It’s my treat, so chug it down.”>

“Why did you order it if you can’t drink it? Anyway, will you be staying here for a while?”

<“Well, I’ll probably go to an Eris Church to meet with my master again after I’ve had my fill of playing with the beautiful ladies here... Ojou-chan, haven’t I already paid for my stay in advance? Could you please stop scraping me?”>

Nerimaki was scraping away at the side of Aigis’s head with a spoon.

With the glass of warm milk still in my hand, I said.

“Well, it’s great if you’re staying for a while. The truth is, I’m here to help someone with the trial to become the chief of this village. I might need your help at some point, so can I count on you if that happens?”

<“Well, I’ll be free anyway, so I don’t really mind, but can you please stop this girl before she scrapes all of me away?”>

Chapter 2

The Truth upon this Man Made Race!

Part 1

It'd be a bit of a pain to find my way back after having a few drinks, so I ended up spending the night at Succubus Lingerie.

Then, next morning.

What awaited me as I made my way back to Megumin's house was-

"Sorry, I've come to pick up our two idiots."

For some reason, I've come to the guardroom of the Crimson Demon Defense Corps.

"Oh, it's good that you're here. Hurry up and take the two of them away."

The leader of the Defense Corps, Bukkoroli the NEET, I believe, seemed quite exhausted.

I turned towards the two of them who were locked up in the cell and said.

"...I'm really reluctant to do so, but I'm here to pick you up."

"Where did you disappear off to last night, Kazuma? If you were here, we would've been able to avoid the Defense Corps with Enemy Detection and Lurk."

Beside Megumin who said such rebellious words was...

"...You know, I really expected you to stop her."

"I have nothing to say..."

Darkness, blushing bright red all the way to her ears, buried her face between her knees.

Apparently, these two went off to complete Megumin's daily routine after I went to the pub.

"This will happen every day as long as I stay here, you know? So it's best if everyone would just get used to it."

"I have no idea what you're saying."

Bukkoroli seemed utterly confused by Megumin's words.

"Well, this girl claims that she'll die if she doesn't cast Explosion every day. The town of Axel is now treating it like a natural occurrence of sorts."

"I really don't get what you're talking about at all."

A problem child that stumps even the Crimson Demons who seemed like they wouldn't be perturbed by anything.

"Well, I guess it can't be helped. I'll try to finish it as early as possible from today onwards, so please inform the other villagers so that they won't be surprised."

.....

"Say, I don't suppose you could keep her here until we're done with the trial? I can even pay you a fee if you want."

"Please don't, the Defense Corps isn't a daycare for problem children. Please properly do your job as a guardian..."

"Hey, would you please stop treating a tender young girl as a troublemaker!?"

The troublemaker shouted from within the cell.

Next to her, an embarrassed Darkness tried to make herself look as small as possible-

"- It doesn't seem like we can take the Chieftain's trial just yet. The grounds for the first trial have yet to be fully repaired..."

After retrieving Darkness and Megumin, we met up with Aqua who went to fetch Yunyun, and she apologetically informed me.

“What do you mean the trial grounds aren’t prepared yet? I’ve only been away for a short while, but it seems like the villagers have really let themselves go since then.”

Megumin sighed as though it had nothing to do with her.

“You were the one who destroyed the grounds in the first place! Actually, if Megumin could go somewhere else to play while the trial is going on...”

“Hey, why don’t you tell me exactly why are you treating me like an outcast!?”

Faced with Megumin’s sudden angry outburst, Yunyun frantically waved her hands.

“N-No, I’m not treating you like an outcast... It’s just, considering your personality, there’s no way you’ll behave yourself during the trial... and if there’s a place to show off at the end of the trial, there’s no way you can restrain yourself, right?”

“Yeah, makes sense.” x3

“Don’t just agree with her! Do you guys think I’m some sort of feral beast or something!?”

“Did you just forget where you were five minutes ago? Most people never see the insides of a jail cell.”

Megumin hastily averted her gaze.

“Still, that doesn’t leave us with much to do. We already walked around the Crimson Demon Village the last time we were here, so what should we do now?”

According to Yunyun, they should be able to retake the trial tomorrow.

I guess we could go back to Axel until then...

Just as everyone was deep in thought-

“I want to plant this girl in the forest.”

Aqua had a longing in her voice as she hugged the pot that now housed the Tranquility Girl.

Come to think of it, we did want to do that, didn't we?

"Umm... As a Crimson Demon myself, it's a little troubling if you plant it close to the village... If possible, I think it's best to exterminate it..."

Yunyun started, but Aqua pushed the Tranquility Girl close to her face and said,

"Can you really kill a girl this young!? Was Yunyun always such a cold-hearted person!? Come on, look her in the eye and say that again!!"

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry, it's impossible, forgive me!"

Part 2

"Let's put her on that hill overlooking the village. She won't get lonely that way..."

"Aqua-san, that's the Hill of the Demon God. It's a popular spot for couples, so we can't put her there. How about placing her deeper in the forest?"

Together with Aqua who was looking for a place to plant the Tranquillity Girl, we toured around the Crimson Demon Village.

"This is starting to be a chore. Why don't we just plant her in Yunyun's backyard? The people who live here won't fall for the Tranquility girl's tricks, so why don't we just turn her into a new tourist attraction and be done with it?"

"As expected of Kazuma. She won't be lonely like this, and Yunyun will end up making a friend too. It really is perfect."

"I think it's perfect too. I'll properly treasure her."

"What kind of stupid things are you saying!? Yunyun too, don't agree so readily! Making friends with monsters is the one line you shouldn't cross!"

They were just one step away from falling for it, but Megumin hastily interjected.

“Say, Megumin, I thought of something that I’d do once I become the chief.”

“W-Where did this come from...? What do you have in mind?”

Towards the hesitant Megumin, Yunyun somewhat bashfully said,

“I’ve been thinking about this for some time. Is it possible to capture monsters that have high intelligence and are capable of communicating to create a monster ranch in the village...”

“Isn’t that the same as what Kazuma was thinking!? Are you planning on turning them into experience points once they are grown up!?”

Megumin grabbed onto Yunyun’s chest and started shaking her, but Yunyun hastily denied.

“T-That isn’t it! If they are provided with food, clothing and shelter, I’m sure the intelligent monsters will have a change of heart! This is the first step in finding a path of coexistence between mankind and monsters...!”

“What do you mean by coexistence!? What a barefaced lie! Do you want friends so badly that you’ll even turn monsters into NEETs!?”

“Of course I do! Isn’t that obvious!?”

Yunyun finally admitted it.

Ignoring the two of them who started fighting, I racked my brains over what to do with the Tranquility Girl.

“You know, I really don’t think there’s any option other than to put her in the forest far away from the village...”

“But she’d be lonely if we do that. Come to think of it, do Tranquility Girls have a gathering spot or something of the sort? She wouldn’t be lonely if we plant her next to others of her kind.”

“If such wicked creatures do have a gathering spot, I would burn it all to the ground.”

“Kazuma, you fiend! You’ll scare this girl, so go away!”

Watching Aqua try and forcefully shove me away, the Tranquility Girl stretched her tiny hands at us and laughed-

-Outside the gates of the Crimson Demon Village lies a large mountain range and vast forest.

We were deep inside that forest right now...

“Waaaah! Yunyun! Yunyun!”

“Light of Saber!”

The One Strike Bear that was attacking Aqua was instantly taken care of by Yunyun.

“Snipe! Snipe! Snipe! Ahh, Yunyun! Yunyun! Save me!”

“Lightning Strike!”

The giant tree-like monsters that surrounded us were turned to charcoal upon being hit by Yunyun’s lightning.

“Oh! Those are the famous Paralyze Slimes! It’s a dangerous monster that paralyzes its prey before taking its time to digest it with its acidic body! Ordinary people would be dissolved along with their equipment, but if I were to be caught, my clothes and armor would go first! But don’t worry, Kazuma, I won’t give in to such humiliation...”

“Inferno!”

The horde of slimes that were slowly approaching Darkness were swept away in a sea of flames.

“...Yunyun, can I have a word?”

Ignoring Aqua who was putting out the smouldering flames and Darkness who was

cradling the remains of the slimes while crying, Megumin, who was at the rear of our party, started.

“What’s wrong, Megumin? I’m busy looking out for monsters with my Search spell right now... Ah, there are some monsters lurking around a short distance away from us. Leave it to me, I’ll wipe them all out in an instant.”

“You don’t need to! Actually, what’s with you today? You’re being unusually aggressive.”

We’ve received a warm welcome from the monsters living around the Crimson Demon Village ever since we entered the forest, but there were easily taken care off thanks to Yunyun.

“Do you really think so...? I mean, thinning out the monsters who are living around the village is also one of the duties of the chief, right? Plus I still have plenty of mana to spare, and I’ve brought plenty of manatite in case I run out...”

“You’re way too into this! Which country are you planning on going to war with by bring so many high quality manatite with you!? We’re a party, so there’s no need for you to charge on ahead!”

Megumin waved her staff and lectured Yunyun who brought out several stones from her pocket.

But Yunyun simply broke out into a huge smile...



“Party... Hehe, Ehehe...”

“Stop doing that, it’s creepy! Why are you smiling when someone is lecturing you!? It’s rude!”

Seems like being accepted into a proper party for once has made Yunyun really motivated for this.

“Isn’t it fine? We should be thankful to Yunyun for taking all of them out. There’s no danger to us, and it’s smooth sailing, so there’s nothing to lecture her about.”

“Slime... Slime... Paralyze Slime...”

Let’s just ignore the one who’s mumbling something with a sorrowful expression.

“There absolutely is! If Yunyun hogs the spotlight, there won’t be any chance for me to shine! I’m going to find strong monsters around here to use my Explosion on!”

“What did you come home to do!? We aren’t here to adventure or raise your levels, you know!?”

Perhaps realizing that the safest place to be is by her side, Aqua stuck extremely close to Yunyun as she interjected.

“Say, Kazuma, Megumin is being really troublesome, so let’s just let her shoot her Explosion off somewhere and carry her the rest of the way.”

“Yeah, she’d be less likely to do something unnecessary if she were to transform into luggage, so let’s do that.”

“I didn’t expect Aqua to say that! I won’t fire it off here! I came back home after all this time, so I am definitely not going to blow it on some small fry!”

Just when I sighed while thinking of how to lecture Megumin who was saying such selfish things-

The hairs on the back of my neck stood straight up.

“EXPLOSION!”

The Explosion spell that Megumin casted without chanting snaked its way past the trees in an exquisite demonstration of control and exploded deep in the forest.

“What are you doing!?”

Yunyun screamed as the blastwave sent her flying along with battering down the trees around us.

Part 3

“Hey, I heard a really loud noise coming from the forest...”

Bukkoroli, standing at the entrance of the village, asked us as we returned.

“Megumin’s brain fried itself.”

“Wait, please, I know it’s my fault for letting loose without warning, but as I’ve said before, there’s a proper reason for that!”

Megumin hastily started making excuses in response to Aqua’s words.

“Yeah, yeah, sure you had a reason. Did you get too irritated? Or were you surprised after seeing a giant bug?”

“This man!”

And started strangling me from behind as I was piggybacking her.

“You just want us to listen to your excuses, right!? Stop stalling and tell us already!”

“Ugh... But you guys definitely won’t believe me...”

Megumin started mumbling as Yunyun put on the pressure.

“I know that you won’t say anything irresponsible. Don’t worry, even if the others won’t believe you, I’ll properly hear you out.”

“Darkness...”

Ignoring the two who were re-enacting a really touching scene right now, Bukkoroli once again asked.

“So, what exactly happened?”

Megumin assumed a serious expression and started...

“The Bomber Majin Moguninnin appeared.”

“If you are going to say such stupid things, I’ll throw you off!”

I moved to lower Megumin from my back, and she clung onto me even tighter to prevent me from doing so.

“That why I didn’t want to say it! I knew none of you will believe it! Darkness, please lecture this man!”

“Er... umm... Well, I’m not that familiar with monsters... So Moganinnin was about to attack us. As expected of Megumin, you did a great job.”

“You didn’t even remember the name right, and your voice is completely monotone! Darkness, I thought I could trust you!”

Bukkoroli let out a sigh.

“Claiming that Moguninnin appeared of all things... couldn’t you have found a better excuse?”

“Leaving other monsters aside, there’s no way I of all people could mistake any monsters that are related to Explosion! Moguninnin was staring at Kazuma from the depths of the forest! It’s that Bomber Majin we are talking about, so I doubt that my chantless Explosion could’ve destroyed it.”

Judging from the unusually serious atmosphere that the Crimson Demons had about them, I’m starting to get the feeling that this whole thing isn’t just a joke.

“Just what is a Bomber Majin? You didn’t come up with it just to mess with us, did you?”

Megumin shook her head.

“Bomber Majin Moguninnin. It’s a mysterious monster that used to lie in a certain Mysterious Facility within the Crimson Demon Village. It is well versed in Detonation magic and can talk in a halting imitation of human speech, but no one can understand what it’s saying. It’ll attack anyone it sees apart from Crimson Demons, and will unleash Detonations without rhyme or reason at night.”

“That sounds like it has a really problematic personality. So, you’re saying that mysterious monster that sounds like it could be one of your cousins had its eye on me?”

Detonation Magic is a weaker version of Explosion Magic.

If a monster that can use that is coming after me...

Just then, Bukkoroli said,

“The Bomber Majin Moguninnin doesn’t usually come out from the depths of the forest, though...”

“You didn’t come up with that just so you’d have an excuse to let off your Explosion every day during your stay here, did you!?”

“How could you say that!? Do you really think I’ll come up with such a ridiculous story just because I wanted to let loose with my Explosion!?”

Hearing Megumin say such things without even a shred of credibility, Bukkoroli shrugged.

“Megumin was always saying strange things. Stuff like seeing a mysterious glowing object fly off towards the east, or that she was a God of Destruction in her previous life, or that a mage who uses Explosion will end up with big breasts...”

“You don’t believe a word of what I’ve said, do you!? You sure are bold for a NEET!”

“S-Shut up, me being a NEET has nothing to do with this! Anyway, stop using your Explosion magic in the forest. It gets really troublesome when you rile up all the monsters like that. At least behave yourself while the Chief’s trial is going on.”

After saying that, Bukkoroli left us and went off on his way.

“-Bomber Majin Moguninnin really was there. Kazuma, you mustn’t leave the village. Moguninnin has it in for all non-Crimson Demon men, particularly those with black hair and eyes.”

“Why does it have a grudge against such a particular target? In the first place, it doesn’t come out from the depths of the forest, right? Are you sure you didn’t misidentify a giant rhinoceros beetle or something?”

“There’s no way I could’ve mistaken a beetle for the Bomber Majin! Anyway, Kazuma, don’t participate as a partner in the Crimson Demon Trial. I’ve also been asked not to participate, so just leave it to Darkness or Aqua to be Yunyun’s partner.”

“Leave it to me.”

“Wait a minute, that’ll be a problem for me! Ah, no, I don’t mean I don’t want to partner with you two or anything!”

Darkness gently smiled at the panicking Yunyun.

“The duty of a Crusader is to protect others. Don’t worry, just leave it to me. I’ll definitely protect you.”

“D-Darkness-san...”

“There’s nothing you need to worry about with me here. Even if you get killed by a powerful monster, I’ll bring you right back with Resurrection.”

“Aqua-sa... No, I’d prefer it if we didn’t have to use Resurrection in the first place...”

Yunyun’s expression seems to be stuck between being touched and something else.

“Eh-... Trials and partners and all that gives it a proper fantasy feel for once, so I really want to give it my all...”

“Just watch the house with me, Kazuma. I’ll guide you around the village. There’s a pub that the parents of a classmate of mine runs.”

“Can we not go there? There’s a troublesome person staying over there.”

And thus, despite coming over to the Crimson Demon Village, I ended up being a NEET.

“Say, we didn’t manage to find a place to plant this girl...”

“Ah.” x4

Part 4

That night.

“So, yeah, I really don’t have much to do tomorrow, so is there anything I could do to help out?”

I offered to help Megumin’s mother after coming home.

I’m not at all like the thick-skinned goddess who appropriated the warmest spot in the house and took an afternoon nap like she owned the place.

Since she’s letting me stay over, this is the least I can do to repay her.

“Oh, my, you’re offering to help? I’m going to gather materials for creating magic items from the deepest dungeon in this country tomorrow...”

“Sorry, is there something easier, like laundry or dishes that you could use some help with instead?”

Seems like it’s a little too early for me to be helping with their work.

“In that case, I’m a little concerned about Moguninnin, so would you like to explore that Mysterious Facility tomorrow?”

“Are you still stuck on that strangely named monster?”

Yunyun will undertake the Chieftain’s trial from tomorrow onwards, and her partner for the first trial will be Darkness.

“I wanna go too! The name ‘Mysterious Facility’ makes it sound like there’d be a ton of treasures hidden within it!”

Aqua, who was happily helping herself to a drink, cheerfully said.

“I’ve heard that it’s been explored many times in the past, so there probably wouldn’t be much left.”

A mysterious facility whose reason for existence is unknown to even the Crimson Demons.

I’ve heard that it’s been turned into a tourist attraction...

“Come on, isn’t it fine to act like proper adventurers and go exploring every once in a while? Plus, with Kazuma’s luck, we might end up finding something good.”

“...Why must you choose precisely the times when I’m not around to act like proper adventurers...”

Darkness muttered to herself, regret slightly creeping into her voice.

“Right, let’s turn in early in preparation for tomorrow. Don’t get too drunk now, Aqua. Now, then, I’ll go on ahead...”

Saying that, Megumin stood up and made her way back to her room-

“Yes, I suppose it’d be best to turn in early. Sorry, Kazuma-san, we don’t have much in the way of entertainment in my house... Though, playing around with my daughter in the same room should be pretty entertaining, heheheh.”

Megumin’s face cringed at Yuiyui’s words.

“What is this parent of mine saying!? Just what are you asking your daughter to do!?”

Yuiyui seemed unperturbed by Megumin’s sudden outburst.

“When we talk about entertainment out in the countryside like this, there’s only one thing I could be referring to. Hurry up and let me see the face of my grandchild.”

“Please stop making lewd jokes in front of your daughter! Kazuma, you say something too!”

“Well, from a physical standpoint, I think it’s a little too early for your daughter to be giving birth. Maybe after she grows up a little more...”

“I’m already grown up enough to bear a child! No, wait, that’s not- Ah, what should I...”

I calmly admonished Megumin as she started making a fuss.

“It’s already night out, so do try and keep it down. Also, you really should choose your words better. It’d be really embarrassing if the neighbours hear you say that you can bear a child and what not.”

“I don’t want to hear that from you! Just whose fault do you think it is in the first place!?”

“By the way, physically speaking, I think my body is ready to bear a child at any time.”

“What kind of stupid things are you saying now, Darkness!? Don’t butt in and go to sleep already!”

“Sleep.”

Megumin collapsed to the ground in response to Yuiyui’s incantation.

The person who put her daughter to sleep without any reservations smiled brightly at me.

“Now, now, whatever happens next is completely up to you! The nights are long around this time of year, so go ahead and do as you please!”

“I’m sorry, even for me, laying hands upon a sleeping girl’s body is a little...”

As I was trying to gently turn down Yuiyui who was pushing her daughter to me, Darkness suddenly stood up.

“Such stuff should be done with the consent of both parties! I definitely cannot accept them crossing the line like this! Even if you are her mother-”

“Sleep.”

Yuiyui cast her spell on Darkness without even looking at her.

“...Even if you are her mother, I can’t overlook that! The duty of a Crusader is to protect others. I’ll protect Megumin’s chastity!”

Darkness has strong willpower, high magic resistance and is resistant to bad status effects.

“Y-You managed to resist it!? My sleep is supposed to be fairly powerful...”

Yuiyui seemed quite surprised that Darkness managed to resist her spell.

“Tch...! Seems like you’ve leveled up quite a bit since the last time you were here!”

“Hmph, do you really think the same trick would work on a member of the Dustiness house twice!? Is Sleep the only spell you can cast!? Go ahead and render me helpless if you can!”

After saying such impressive lines, Darkness squared up against Yuiyui...!

“Then how about this? Paralyze!”

“Weak! The Paralyze Slimes I saw in the forest today could put out a better numbing attack!”

Behind the triumphant Darkness, Aqua was lying dead drunk on the floor.

Ignoring all three of them, I carried the sleeping Megumin to her room–

Part 5

A ray of moonlight shone through the window.

It fell upon Megumin’s gentle sleeping face, illuminating her in the darkness.

Of course, as a gentleman, I wouldn’t lay a hand on her.

Using my own arm as a pillow, I laid down next to her and watched over her peaceful sleeping face.

“...Mmm... Behold my power... Release the forbidden seal... lay waste to all creation...”

Mumbling something that’s in no way peaceful at all, Megumin rolled over in her bed.

Perhaps noticing something off with me sleeping next to her, she slowly opened her eyes-

“...Sorry, can I ask what are you doing?”

“I was watching the sleeping face of the person I love.”

Megumin jumped off the bed.

“What do you mean person you love!? Why are you naked from the waist up!?”

“Well, when you wake up next to a half naked person of the opposite gender, you would normally think that something happened, right?”

After distancing herself from me, Megumin hastily patted her body down to check for anything off.

“Of course! Isn’t this a really big deal!? Ah, wait, my bra is missing!?”

“I thought you might have trouble sleeping if you had something constricting your chest. Also, I heard that you’ll grow bigger breasts if you sleep without a bra.”

I pointed over by the bedside, and Megumin grasped the bra placed over there tightly in her hand.

“I don’t need your concern over such matters! You don’t usually pay much heed to me, so why are you so concerned only at such times!? Even if it’s you, removing my bra while I’m sleeping...”

“Oh, don’t worry, I properly removed it with Steal like a gentleman.”



“Oh, how considerate of you! That goofy smile of yours is really infuriating! What would you have done if you accidentally took my panties instead!?”

Covering her body with her robe, she looked a little like a teruterubozu as she squirmed around underneath it.

“Now, now, calm down. It’d be boring if you thought nothing happened despite us sharing the same bed just like all the previous times, so I thought I’d give you a little surprise. Did I scare you?”

“Yeah you did! You really didn’t do anything, right!? I don’t want to become an adult without remembering any of it!”

Seemingly having finished putting on her bra, Megumin brought both arms out from underneath the robe.

“Don’t worry, you know me. I’m not that gutsy.”

“That’s pretty convincing, but it’s quite pathetic to hear that from the person I like!”

Megumin, who had been breathing heavily since she woke up, finally started to calm down.

“Seriously, what kind of person is my mother... Casting Sleep on her daughter and letting her share a bed with a man, just how little common sense does she have...”

“Well, that lack of common sense just means that the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.”

Sighing, Megumin sat down next to me and stretched her legs.

Despite her complains, she still had no qualms about getting close to me. Is this a sign of how close we are?

“I’m not exactly opposed to that sort of relationship, you know? It’s just that, crossing the line because of my mother’s schemes while in my own home is a little...”

“Well, even if you say that, something will definitely interfere, right? I’ve been wondering if I’m under some sort of curse to remain a virgin for life. I’ve asked Aqua to check if I’m actually cursed several times, but she keeps saying I’m fine.”

Why exactly does something always end up interfering every single time I'm about to cross the line?

I'm supposed to have high luck too. Isn't it odd?

Though, if it was because Eris-sama is harbouring a secret love for me and is interfering, I might be okay with that...

"Just who exactly would put such a pointless curse on you?"

"There could be quite a few fans who wish for me to keep my purity. I've been exceptionally popular recently. I've heard that a beautiful adventurer who introduced herself as a fan of mine appeared in Axel's adventurer's guild."

Upon hearing those words, Megumin's eye twitched.

"...Will you meet with that person when you return to Axel?"

"Well, it sounds like she travelled a long way to meet me, so of course I'll see her. Anyway, I'll just give her a handshake and a signature and the like. I thought this might happen someday, so I've been practising my signature. I secretly left a signature on one of the pillars in the adventurer's guild as thanks after all they've done for me."

Heheh, so this is what jealousy looks like.

Megumin seemed a little troubled, but occasionally teasing each other like this was one of the methods of courtship that adults practice...

"The guild lady was really angry when she was cleaning it up. She told me to tell you not to scribble all over the walls."

"What!? That pillar would've been able to fetch a high price in a few decades with my signature on it!"

Facing my indignation, Megumin let out a soft giggle.

"Then let me have your first signature... Satou Kazuma... I think that's a very good name."

"Hearing you praise my name makes me feel really conflicted somehow..."

“Hey, I just praised you, so explain exactly what you mean!”

I might have made her angry there, but as the eldest son of the Satou clan, I couldn’t just keep quiet.

Just then, despite her complaints, Megumin laid down besides me and used my arm as a pillow.

Doing that despite being alone with me this late at night... she must really trust me.

I would’ve thought that’s she’s trying to signal me to do something, but I have the ability to learn from the past.

Plus, doing that sort of thing in the same house where her parents are living is a little...

“Um, Kazuma, can I say something?”

“I don’t think you should.”

.....

“It’s kind of hard for me to say, but it’s hitting me. And it’s getting bigger...”

“Please don’t mind it.”

I can’t help it, it’s a natural physiological reaction.

It’d be stranger still if a boy undergoing puberty doesn’t have this sort of reaction when a girl is hugging onto him.

“I should say this, but don’t attack my precious son. He’s delicate on top of being shy.”

“I wouldn’t do that over a natural reaction. Plus, I’m the one who hugged you in the first place. Just how unreasonable of a person do you think I am?”

I recall being unreasonably attacked back when something similar happened between Darkness and me.

...Just then, I noticed that Megumin’s gaze is focused squarely on a problematic part of my body.

“You’re a girl undergoing puberty too, so I can understand having some interest in the body of the opposite sex, but you still shouldn’t stare that much.”

“Ah, n-no, that’s not it! It’s just, I thought it might be hard on you on to have to bear with it every time...”

Yeah, it totally is!

And I can’t make use of that store now that we’re here in the Crimson Demon Village.

At the very least, I’d like five minutes to myself!

“...Umm, should I give you a hand?”

I really wish I’d stop getting subjected to such cockteasing situations-

“Wait, what did you just say?”

“Your face is way too serious! I-I asked if I should give you a hand...”

Wait...

“Eromin! You really are a closet pervert like Darkness said!”

“And you’re being way too loud! Who exactly is a closet pervert!?”

No, I mean...!

“You were the one who said something really outrageous! Do you understand what you’re saying!? You want to give me a hand with this...!”

“Please stop emphasizing that part! I just thought that it’s a little hard on you to put up with these sorts of situation all the time, that’s all!”

Does this girl understand what she means when she says that?

What does she mean by give me a hand? Does she mean give me something to think about?

Or does she mean something more physical...

No, wait, in the first place...!

“Hearing a girl younger than me with no experience offer to do something like that somehow feels more immoral than the act itself...”

“Your words are getting more and more obscene! You keep saying that I’m a vixen that does nothing but tease you without following through... I’m not very sure what to do, but, well, after getting excited like that, isn’t it pretty tough on you...?”

I don’t know if it’s because she’s nervous or excited, but her eyes were glowing bright red before she turned away.

“Of course it’s tough! I even thought of you as a complete temptress!”

“Please stop calling me a temptress! I already said I’m fine with it if you’ll properly take responsibility!”

What the hell am I talking about while spending the night in the house of a girl who’s younger than me?

What exactly am I planning to do after this?

And, I just realized, I’m currently naked from the waist up!

“So are you going to do it or not!? This situation is really embarrassing, you know!?”

“I’m embarrassed too! I’m about to instruct an inexperienced and awkward girl to do all sorts of things right when her mother is sleeping right below, you know!? Just how much do you think I have to pay for this sort of play in the shop!?”

“If you are going to do it, then hurry up and do it already! Stop explicitly spelling things out!”

“You suddenly sprung this on me! I haven’t mentally prepared myself! Yeah, yeah, I know, we’ll definitely be interrupted right before the good parts! I’m under that sort of curse after all! But even so, I can still get my hopes up! If anything, this sort of bittersweet back and forth is making me more excited!”

“Oh, I get it, I get already, so just take it off! No one has come in even after all the fuss we made, so I’m sure tonight will...”

— Just as Megumin said that.

A loud explosion resounded from the direction of the forest.

The two of us looked at each other.

“...See?”

“.....Let’s have Aqua cast Break Spell on you tomorrow.”

Part 6

The morning after that explosion took away any sense of romance.

“Hey, what exactly is this all about!?”

“That’s what we want to ask you, Megumin!”

We were having breakfast and pretending as if nothing happened last night, when Bukkoroli, followed by a few other Crimson Demons, barged in and restrained Megumin.

“I don’t know what’s happening, but for now can you please let me go? I don’t think this is really something you should be doing to a girl.”

“...Well, I agree, but can you promise not to run away or start rampaging?”

After confirming Megumin’s affirmation, Bukkoroli loosened his grip...

“You let your guard down! I’m going to choke the life out of you!”

“Argh! M-Megumin you liar!”

The moment she was released, Megumin pounced on Bukkoroli and put him in a

sleeper hold.

“Would you keep a promise you made to the Demon King’s army or monsters? NEETs are existences even lower than slimes! Upholding a promise you made with such a creature is plain retarded!”

“H-Hey, Megumin, that guy is going to die, so let him go! And don’t pick on NEETs like that!”

After I restrained Megumin, the other Crimson Demons managed to pry the limp and blue-faced Bukkoroli from her grasp.

Next to us, Aqua was nonchalantly sipping tea as though two Crimson Demons weren’t having a wrestling match right beside her.

“So, what’s all this about? What has our Megumin done this time?”

The other Crimson Demons turned to face Aqua.

“You know about the explosion that took place in the forest last night, right?”

“We are very sorry! We’ll make sure this never happens again! Hey, Megumin, hurry up and apologize!”

Darkness immediately prostrated herself.

“Don’t just apologize on your own, Darkness! Actually, stop assuming that it’s my fault just because there’s an explosion involved!”

Next to the prostrating Darkness, Megumin’s words had absolutely zero persuasive power.

“Then exactly who else would do this sort of thing?”

“Well, let’s start with establishing Megumin’s alibi. Who were you with and what were you doing last night?”

Megumin’s face blushed bright red upon hearing the other Crimson Demon’s question.

“...I-I can’t say that.”

She said in a soft, almost inaudible voice.

“See, I knew you were behind it! Apologize for calling me a NEET and strangling me!... Actually, now that I think about it, that rash of explosions some time ago was done by you, right? You were the one who testified that those explosions were caused by a Devil that snuck into the village, right?”

It seems like Megumin had some idea of what Bukkoroli was talking about, the back of her head started overflowing with cold sweat.

“Megumin just reacted! And you can’t provide an alibi either, so that means-!”

“Why are you turning on me too, Kazuma!? The reason I can’t say it is because I was together with you last night! It’s too embarrassing to say out loud!”

The Crimson Demons let out a soft “oh”.

“I see... The Megumin I thought of as a younger sister has become an adult before I knew it... Sorry for disturbing your meal...”

“To think that Megumin, of all people... The world really is full of surprises. I had her pegged as the one furthest from any concept of romance...”

“We were just together, we didn’t do anything! Please don’t spread any strange rumours!”

Megumin’s face was bright red as she shouted at the Crimson Demons.

“Just to be sure, it really wasn’t you, right?”

“You were there with me, Kazuma! In the first place, I already used Explosion yesterday when we were out trying to find a place to bury the Tranquility Girl, so why are you suspecting me!?”

The three of us fell deep in thought after hearing Megumin’s words...

“So what’s up with this situation? Is there another Megumin running around or something?”

“She isn’t a Slime, and I’ve never heard of Crimson Demons duplicating like that.

Maybe she got her hands on some really high quality manatite without us knowing?”

“I’m not an accomplice, by the way. In the first place, I can’t transfer any mana to her without Kazuma.”

“Hey, I casted magic right in front of you three and have a proper alibi, so please stop suspecting me!”

After Megumin’s outburst, the other Crimson Demons who were listening in seem to have made some sort of realization.

“So, that explosion was...”

“The thing that Megumin was talking about...”

“Bomber Majin Moguninnin!?” x4

“Could you guys please stop saying that name.”

So it really wasn’t something that Megumin made up?

Come to think of it, I think I felt the hairs on the back of my neck stand up just before Megumin unleashed her Explosion yesterday. Could it have been my Enemy Detection skill...?

The Crimson Demons surrounding Megumin fell deep into thought.

“If that’s the case, now’s not the time to be holding the Chieftain’s trial. If someone from outside the village gets hurt by that ninin, the number of tourists we get will go down...”

“Let’s discuss this with the chief. After that, we should send out a large party to go ninin hunting.”

Megumin seemed oddly flustered upon hearing those words.

“H-Hold on a minute, there isn’t a particular need to call off the Chieftain’s trial, is there?”

“There’s no particular rush to choose our next chief, but we need to deal with ninin as

soon as possible. Besides, according to tradition, in order to become the next chief, one needs to either successfully complete the trial, or take down an impressive target with just two people. We can just let whoever takes down ninin become the next chief.”

“I might consider becoming chief if I don’t have to undertake that annoying trial to do so...”

I have a really bad feeling about this.

At this rate, it’s going to turn into a free for all where the first person to arrive at the scene become chief.

The identity of that loner girl will be swept away just like this.

...Just then.

“I’m sorry!”

“Megumin? Why are you suddenly apologizing?”

Megumin suddenly fell into a deep bow.

“...The one who caused the explosion last night was me. I was surprised by a large rhinoceros beetle while taking a night stroll and casted my spell by reflex.”

“What the hell did you do!?”

Bukkoroli shouted.

“See, I knew it was Megumin’s doing! My eyes aren’t made of glass! Apologize for strangling me and calling me a NEET!”

“I’ll apologize for strangling you, but I won’t apologize for calling you a NEET.”

“Why do you hate NEETs that much!?”

–Bukkoroli and the others left after giving Megumin a stern talking to,

“Why did you say that!? Weren’t you having fun with me last night?”

“Having fun!?”

“Please don’t put it that way! And you didn’t need to respond, Darkness!”

Well, I can probably guess why Megumin took the blame for that.

And Aqua, who’s been leisurely having tea the entire time, said,

“Well, knowing our tsundere, I bet she just didn’t want to interfere with Yunyun’s chieftain’s trial, right?”

“I see. Yeah, she can’t be honest whenever Yunyun’s involved.”

“Oh shut up, you two! Who exactly is a tsundere!? I’ve been disqualified from taking the trial, but if I can sneak away and take down ninin myself, I can steal the position of the chief...”

Darkness pulled on my sleeve as Megumin was weaving some really transparent excuses.

“(Hey, Kazuma, what exactly did you mean by having fun last night...? Megumin’s mother still managed to render me immobile in the end...)”

“(We slept in the same bed, and when that came up, Megumin...)”

I whispered what happened last night into Darkness’s ear...

“(W-W-W-What!? Just what did you make an innocent young girl do...!?)”

“(Don’t make it sound that bad! Unlike you who keeps leaving me whenever things start going, Megumin offered to take proper responsibility when that came up...!)”

“I can hear you two! What the hell are you talking about this early in the morning!?”

Megumin screamed at us.

At the same time, the doorbell rang.

It's probably Komekko returning.

The rapid sound of footsteps accompanied the sound of the door sliding open.

And the person who finally appeared in front of us is Yunyun, clearly nervous about the upcoming trial.

"G-Good morning, Darkness-san! I'll be in your care today... Megumin, why is your face so red?"

"Hey, Yunyun, listen to this. Yesterday, Megumin and this man-"

"Nothing happened! Come on Darkness, hurry up and get out there!"

Part 7

"-And this is the Mysterious Facility. We visited this place the last time we were here, but we never went inside, did we?"

After sending off Yunyun and Darkness, Megumin led us to the Mysterious Facility that was but a short distance away from the underground bunker that we explored the last time we were here.

From the outside, it looked just like a giant building made out of concrete.

As Megumin said, we've been here before, but now that I had the chance to see it again...

"Kazuma-san, Kazuma-san, this is a laboratory, right?"

"Yeah, it totally is a laboratory."

"What's a laboratory? You two say some really strange things sometimes."

I didn't notice it the last time I was here, but there's a sign hanging right over the entrance.

“Noise Research Laboratory, huh.”

“You can read those words?”

Megumin seemed surprised, but it’s only natural. The sign was written in Japanese, after all.

If I recall, Noise was that magically advanced country that created the Crimson Demons a long time ago.

Judging from the sign and the appearance of the building, this is definitely the work of that annoying Japanese cheat user.

“Say, Aqua, that Bomber Majin is the work of that cheat possessing Japanese guy, right? He made it and the Crimson Demons gave it that name, right? I’ve been thinking this for some time now, but aren’t most of the annoying problems in this world your fault?”

“What are you saying you shitty NEET!? It’s not my fault, it’s the fault of the Japanese with abnormal common sense. All I do is give them power and send them on their way. The ones who give monsters strange names and disrupt the ecosystem and spread strange words and bits of culture are the Japanese. I’d really wish they’d have some self awareness.”

That’s really more the fault of the one who sent them to another world without doing a proper background check.

“Stop talking about incomprehensible stuff and head inside already. There are a few traps lying around, so watch your step.”

“Then leave this to me. I picked up the Trap Detection skill for exactly these types of situations.”

“You can’t get any great accomplishments, but you’re really handy when it comes to little things like this.”

“Oh shut up.”

Ignoring Aqua who was saying something that could’ve been taken as praise but also not really, the three of us walked right up to the facility...

Megumin's word of warning made us all stop in our tracks.

"Right, here's the first trap. The door will suddenly open, but that's just to make you let your guard down, so watch out for it. It might seem very inviting, but it will close after a second."

...What stood in front of us was a standard glass automatic door.

After issuing that warning, Megumin carefully prodded in front of the door with her staff.

"Say, Kazuma, can you let me handle the traps in this facility?"

"That's no fair, I want to show off to Megumin by deftly avoiding these traps too."

"Please don't let your guard down! The area ahead of us is particularly dangerous!"

It seems like the various convenience infrastructure of my world come off as traps to the people of this world.

Eventually, we followed behind a very serious looking Megumin as she lead the way into the facility-

<"Up ahead is a clean room. Please change into dust-proof workwear before proceeding.">

"Kazuma, Aqua, did you hear that? That mysterious voice is a warning. One must acquire and equip a Gustproof Workwear before carrying on. A violent gust blows at you if you enter the small room at the end. Right now it's just air, but it must have sprayed a deadly acid in the past to prevent anyone without the proper equipment from entering..."

"It's probably just an air shower to prevent dust from being brought into the clean room."

"Kazuma-san, Kazuma-san, Megumin is really cute right now. She'll definitely provide

a really cute reaction if a TV was here.”

Probably trying to protect us, Megumin blocked the air nozzles before allowing us to step into the entrance into the clean room.

Inside the clean room was a conveyor belt, and right next to it was a giant machine...

“That’s a fearsome trap that has resulted in a lot of casualties. A vile trap that devours anything that steps on that platform. It’s currently disabled now, but don’t let your guard down.”

“It looks to be some kind of assembly line. Did it break down?”

“The sign on the side says ‘Game Girl production line.’”

Megumin gasped.

“You’re saying that this thing uses what it has consumed to create something... Could that thing be us Crimson Demons... Kazuma, I think I’ve just stumbled upon a truth that should never have been revealed...”

“This thing probably creates a toy.”

“The toy we found in that underground bunker, right?”

In response to our instant rebuttal, Megumin sadly looked at us.

“You two don’t need to be that considerate. The Crimson Demons are a man-made race that goes against the laws of the gods... I’m sure my ancestors were created right here...”

“In the name of Aqua-san, I’ll forgive the existence of the joke tribe. After all, the Crimson Demons are really amusing.”

“Please don’t call us that!”

Just then, I noticed a small machine at the back of the facility.

“Hey, Aqua, that’s a gachapon! There’s a gachapon here!”

“Oh, there really is. It’s empty, but that really is a gachapon.”

“Do the two of you know what that box is?”

“This is a gachapon machine. It spits out a capsule stored within in exchange for coins. Occasionally it’s used for raffles. I don’t know what it’s doing here, but it sure is nostalgic.”

“I don’t quite get it, but it’s a machine aimed at children, right? Then it has no relation to the creation of the Crimson Demons.”

Just as I was lost in my memories, Aqua, who was fiddling with the machine, seemed to have found something.

“Crimson Demon modification rights available for a limited time only, it says.”

“Oh, it really is. First place, prototype Playscation, second place, Game Girl Color, third place, Crimson Demon Modification rights- Hey, what are you doing?”

Megumin wordlessly scraped away the words.

“You two didn’t see anything, okay?”

“It isn’t okay at all, but I get it. Just buy me some wine later.”

“Don’t just erase the history of the Crimson Demons...”

— We explored the facility for quite some time afterwards, but we still didn’t manage to find anything related to the Bomber Majin.

“The only thing we learned is that Megumin’s ancestors came out from a gacha...”

“Wait, putting it like that will invite misunderstandings. At least say that the modification rights came from the gacha.”

Megumin, riding on my back, lazily said.

In the end, we didn’t get much out of the facility.

After settling Megumin’s routine on our way back, we safely arrived at Megumin’s

house.

“I’m back~ Komekko, let’s have dinner. Has mother returned yet?”

“Welcome back, Nee-chan. Mom’s gone into a dungeon, so she won’t be back today. The golden onee-chan is back, though.”

Golden onee-chan is referring to Darkness, huh.

I wonder if Yunyun managed to successfully complete her trial.

“Komekko, have you heard anything about Yunyun’s trial?”

“Yunyun said she passed the trial! But she was crying!”

...She was crying?

I wondered what happened as I entered the house.

Darkness was hugging her knees in the middle of the living room.

“Yo, Darkness, I’m back. What happened with Yunyun’s trial? I’ve heard that she succeeded from Komekko, but...”

“...No more Crimson Demon Trials... You can be her partner tomorrow...”

Darkness, who was so confident this morning, tiredly mumbled with tears in her eyes.

Chapter 3

Peace upon these Momentary Ordinary Days!

Part 1

“I originally thought that the trial was about answering riddles.”

Darkness spoke in a hesitant, stuttering manner while holding the cup of tea Megumin brewed for her.

“That’s my impression as well, but what could push you to such a state? The Chieftain’s trial is tough, but it’s something that could be overcome with two Crimson Demons. Just what happened? If it’s something unfair, I’ll go scold them for you.”

Megumin gently asked while stroking Darkness’s head like she was comforting a crying child.

“Megumin destroyed out all of the magic items they use to create riddles... They also said they were tired of riddles, so they decided to go with something else...”

“So it’s your fault!”

Megumin quickly averted her eyes.

“So what exactly did they make you do, Darkness?”

“‘The most important thing for a Crimson Demon is aesthetics! Strike a pose and name yourselves!’ they said, so they made Yunyun and me strike cool poses and name ourselves until they were satisfied.”

M-My condolences...

—Yuiyui ended up spending the night in a dungeon, so no shenanigans happened that night.

And next morning...

“Leave the trial to me today.”

The first thing Aqua said to Yunyun as she visited in the morning were those words that did nothing to inspire confidence.

“I feel a little uneasy leaving things to you, but Darkness is in no condition to participate...”

“Uuu... I don’t want that sort of embarrassment... that is not the kind I desire...”

As Darkness mumbled gloomily, Yunyun gazed around like she was looking for someone.

“If you are looking for Megumin, she got taken away as the prime suspect for causing the explosion last night.”

“What is she doing!? And why is Kazuma-san so calm!?”

Oh, yeah, another explosion happened in the forest last night.

“Causing explosions and getting dragged away by the cops is just business as usual for her. More importantly, you’re taking your second trial today, right?”

“Y-Yes... I don’t think they’ll do something like yesterday’s trial...”

Yunyun trailed off.

“Say, can you show me the poses you struck and the lines you said yesterday?”

“Absolutely not.”

The normally shy and soft-spoken Yunyun strongly objected.

“N-Now then, Aqua-san, shall we head off?”

“Yes, I’ll show you what I can do today. I’ve been thinking of special poses and ways to name myself last night, so I didn’t get much sleep, but you can look forward to my performance today.”

“N-No, I don’t think they’ll use the same thing for the second trial...”

With a significant amount of unease in her voice, Yunyun headed off with Aqua for their trial.

“Now then, shall we go pick Megumin up?”

“Say, Kazuma, instead of going to pick her up every day, wouldn’t it be better to think of a way for her not to be thrown into jail in the first place?”

Part 2

As we were walking down the street, I came across a strangely familiar young man.

“Oh, hey, Kazuma, it’s your rival.”

Darkness said something really strange upon seeing him.

“What are you talking about? The undefeated me has no rivals. Though, he does seem familiar somehow...”

“D-Did you really forget about him? He’s... umm, I think his name was...”

“It’s Mitsurugi! I thought the Lady of the Dustiness family was the most normal out of the bunch, but to think that you would forget my name too...!”

Indeed, the Swordmaster who wields the Magic Blade Gram is standing before me.

“Yo, it’s been some time. How’ve you been? Anyway, I’m in a rush, so...”

“Hold it! Why are you acting like you are avoiding me!?”

Mitsurugi hastily grabbed my arm as I tried to leave.

“Well, it’s not like we are that close. Plus, it’d be a bother if we get into a fight every time we meet.”

“W-Well, that’s true, but... No, more importantly, what are you doing here? The

monsters around the Crimson Demon Village aren't creatures someone of your level can handle."

"A friend of mine is undertaking the Chieftain's trial in this village, so I came here to help out. What about you? What are you doing here?"

From the looks of it, Mitsurugi came here alone without bringing his usual hanger ons.

"Well, this might sound crazy, but a divine relic of mine ran away... He left a note and went on a journey... Haha, it's fine to laugh if you feel like it..."

Darkness, who doesn't know about Aigis, gave Mitsurugi a genuine look of concern.

"Seems like you're pretty worn out... There's a hot springs around here, so take your time and recuperate... And, um, don't push yourself, okay?"

"Haha, it's only natural that you don't believe me... The truth is, the Goddess Eris-sama appeared in my dreams. She entrusted me with a very important divine relic and asked me to save the world with its power, but... one day, I woke up to a letter... 'As you are right now, you are thoroughly unfit to wield me. You depend too much on the power of that magic sword. As a divine relic, I too have my own matters to attend to. Set off on a journey to find me while I'm off tying up a few loose ends, and become stronger in the process! I'll be waiting for you. Now, Hero, rise up to the challenge'..."

The matters that the divine relics set off to attend to is to see the Crimson Demons that are famous for having a lot of beauties.

"Afterwards, I've heard that there's a skilled fortune teller in the Crimson Demon Village, so I came here to ask her to look into the divine relic's whereabouts... But she probably thinks I'm pulling her leg too... She told me that he's sexually harassing the waitresses at the pub, but that's obviously facetious..."

That fortune teller is very accurate indeed.

"Well, that's enough about me. It's a trial that the divine relic Eris bestowed upon me set before me. I didn't expect it to be so easy to overcome. Anyway, now that I've met you, I should pass on a warning."

Just as I was debating whether I should tell him about Aigis or not, Mitsurugi's face suddenly turned serious.

“The Demon King’s Generals have put the town of Axel in their sights... No, perhaps it’s more accurate to say that the Demon King’s army is aiming for Axel. I don’t know if their goal is the destruction of the town itself, or you, or perhaps even Aqua-sama, but if you aren’t confident about standing up to them, it’s best that you lay low in this village or the capital for awhile.”

Saying that, he turned around.

“You defeated me once before. It’d be problematic if you were to lose to the Demon King. I’ll definitely beat you next time. And then, Aqua-sama will...”

Leaving behind such dramatic parting words, Mitsurugi left.

“...Say, Darkness, doesn’t the way he put it make me sound like a main character of some sort?”

“No matter how you slice it, he looks much more like a protagonist than you.”

After seeing off Mitsurugi-

“Now, then, let’s go get Megumin-”

“...S-Say, Kazuma, getting Megumin back is nice and all, but maybe we could take a little walk before then? I mean, back in Alcanretia, we explored the city together too, didn’t we?”

Darkness suddenly said.

“I don’t mind taking a walk, but I don’t know what Megumin will say if she found out that we went out to have fun without her.”

More to the point, if it was just a walk, we could go get Megumin and walk around with all three of us...

“W-Well, I thought we could do something date-like for once...”

Darkness trailed off...

A date, huh?

“You know, now that I think about it, I don’t think I’ve ever gone on a proper date before...”

“R-Right!? No, I do think that walking around town together is pretty date-like, but I’ve always looked up to those storybook-style dates where you fuss over what to wear and arrive at the meeting point earlier than the appointed time-”

Darkness slowly blushed as she said all that in one breath.



“So you have a maidenly side too. If you had this ojou-sama-like feeling back when we first met, I might’ve fallen head over heels for you.”

“Eh!? Is-Is that so?... I thought that such maiden-like hobbies wouldn’t be a good fit for a noble lady of a great house, but... I see...”

Well, I was more talking about keeping her sexual fetishes hidden and coming off like a regular girl, but I guess it doesn’t matter.

“S-Say, Kazuma, the weather is really great today!”

“Apparently the Crimson Demons use magic to control the weather, so it’s always sunny around these parts.”

Since it’s always sunny out here, the Crimson Demon Village is always perfect for a walk.

They’re wasting magic as usual, but the magic of the Crimson Demons is impressive nonetheless.

“Look, Kazuma, a cat is taking a nap on that fence! It’s great that it’s peaceful out here.”

“That’s a Crimson Demon familiar. Apparently they’re there to monitor the area around the village.”

I relayed some local trivia to Darkness when she happily pointed towards the cat.

“Look, the elderly are leisurely fishing over there...”

“Ah, those guys are gathering up the monsters who live in the river. They are using steel cables for fishing lines, so they can send lightning based magic down the lines when they get a bite and level up that way.”

Darkness, who was so elated a short while ago, slowly frowned.

“...Kazuma, I don’t think this village is a good place for a date.”

“Well, it’s the home village of the famously combative Crimson Demons, after all. What, do you really want to go on a date that badly?”

Darkness, walking next to me, suddenly turned to face me.

“Of course! In the first place, you were trying way too hard to get me to fall for you!”

“That’s not how I remembered it! I lent you a hand and you fell for me on your own!”

I immediately retorted with a sound rebuttal, but it seems like what I just said was the absolute worst possible thing.

“O—On my own!? I fell for you on my own!? Who was it that barged into my wedding back when I was about to be married off to Alderp!? And you scattered your entire fortune in front of everyone and declared that you bought me or whatever before taking me away!”

“W-Well, I can’t help it, now can I?! It’s not like I can help being cool! I can’t help getting all kinds of accomplishments! Sorry for being cool! I’ll apologize for achieving all that glory! Yeah, normally everyone would fall for me, right!?”

“What glory!? Don’t get ahead of yourself! The only people who’d fall for a trashy man like you are weirdos like Megumin and me!”

“Do you like me or hate me!? Pick one and stick with it already! If you like me, then praise me more! There’s a fan waiting for me when I go back to Axel, you know!”

Darkness looked at me with a doubtful gaze upon hearing that.

“Don’t tell me you actually believe that? It’s probably some scammer attracted by your wealth or fame. It’s a little strange for me to say this, but there’s no way a fan of you can exist.”

“S-Shut up! My only flaw is being unwilling to work! I’m otherwise a pretty good catch, you know!?”

“Being unwilling to work is a fatal flaw!”

Just as Darkness and I were locking horns,

“If Kazuma doesn’t want to work, I’ll just find a job to support you.”

“You’re being too soft on him, Megumin! This is why he’s becoming more and more

slovenly!”

“You’re one to talk! Didn’t you say that your type was a trashy man who doesn’t work!?”

.....

The two of us turned around, and standing right there was Megumin.

“You two sure seemed to be having fun while I was in the lock-up. Do you mind if I join in?”

Darkness and I lowered our heads-

“-I told her multiple times that we should go pick up Megumin, but Darkness...”

“Y-You were saying that you never went on a proper date or whatever too! N-No, Megumin, that’s not it, we haven’t been here in quite some time, so we were talking about going sightseeing...”

In response to our utterly pathetic excuses, Megumin shot us an exasperated look.

“You want a proper date, huh? So let’s go on a date with all three of us. I’ll guide you to some great shops.”

“That doesn’t sound like a date... No, nevermind...”

We didn’t do anything particularly bad, but for some reason, I just couldn’t say anything.

“Anyway, let’s go for lunch. There’s a restaurant I used to work at around the corner.”

“Yes.”

Following the strangely chipper Megumin, we ended up taking a walk around the village.

“-Welcome! Oh, hey, Megumin! It’s been a while. Have you learnt any other spells apart

from Explosion?”

“Yes, it has been some time. I have no intention of learning anything else other than Explosion. There was a period of time where I considered learning Advanced Magic, but when I gave my card to Kazuma over here, he said ‘The only spell that suits you is Explosion. Only focus on pursuing the path of explosions...’

“I did not say that. I definitely did not go that far.”

After I denied Megumin’s rampant delusion, the other Crimson Demon said.

“Oh, that’s good. We had a really long argument over what we would do if Megumin learnt some other spells.”

“Oh, so you called a meeting over my Explosion magic? Well, of course you would. Learning any other magic would be a waste of skill points, after all.”

“No, we were discussing your new nickname. The title of the Crimson Demon’s number one mage would become the one who calls down roaring thunder, I mean, Yunyun’s title, right? That’s why Megumin’s new title should be the number one joke mage of the Crimson Demons-”

Megumin pounced on him without a word.

“Hey, calm down, Megumin! Your opponent is an Archmage! They have really low constitution, so don’t strangle them!”

“I too am an Archmage, and a girl on top of that! I’ll show you the power of the joke mage!”

A flurry of voices shot out as Megumin started rampaging.

“Ten thousand eris on the joke mage!”

“Thirty thousand on the worst mage!”

“Fifty thousand eris on the Explosion mage!”

“Hey, I don’t mind you guys betting on me, but stop calling me by those weird names! Though, Explosion mage sounds cool, so I’ll let that slide... Oh, fine, I’ll take all of you on!”

“I don’t care what you do, just take it outside!”

After getting thrown out of the restaurant, we decided to head back to Megumin’s house for lunch.

“Are the two of you alright? Seriously, picking a fight with Crimson Demons... There’s a limit as to how reckless you can get.”

“You were the one who charged at them in the first place. Is that really something you should be saying? Anyway, it’s fine, isn’t it? Having scrapes like this from time to time really makes me feel like an adventurer.”

Megumin ended up attacking all those people who were jeering at her, and after seeing the numerical disadvantage that Megumin had, Darkness and I entered the fray on her side.

“Yes, as a knight, I couldn’t stand idly by as my companion is being called worst mage and joke mage. Plus, it was a pretty good match. I enjoyed myself quite a bit!”

“The guy who was facing you ended up begging you to let him off with tears in his eyes, you know? You really should stop getting others to satisfy your masochistic urges.”

Megumin let out a small giggle.

“To us Crimson Demons, calling you the worst is somewhat of a compliment. It’s an ancient saying that anyone who is referred to as the worst would end up awakening to new powers.”

“That’s pretty cliché development, but... I really don’t get the sensibilities of you Crimson Demons.”

As we were making our way back to Megumin’s house, a familiar looking girl called out to us.

“Oh, Megumin? It’s been some time!”

“Hey, Arue. It’s really rare to find you outside considering how often you hole yourself up in your home. Are you still a NEET aiming to be an author?”

The person who called out to us was a fairly well developed young lady wearing an eyepatch.

“I-I’m not a NEET! I’m a proper author! I’m writing for the Crimson Demon newspaper, and I even released a book recently! I’m earning money, so I’m not a NEET!”

“I-I get it, so stop pulling on my eyepatch! It’s something you gave to me! Plus it hurts!”

This troublesome Arue girl pulled upon Megumin’s eyepatch as a form of protest.

I think I recall being thrown for a loop in the past thanks to her actions...

Oh yeah, Yunyun’s letter!

“Hey, Megumin, she’s the strange girl who mailed that scribbled story to Yunyun and caused us all kinds of problems, right!? I haven’t forgotten that!”

“Ah, you’re the outsider who tore up my manuscripts! I didn’t forget that either!”

Arue angrily said, her eye glowing bright red.

“What’s the difference between an author and a NEET anyway?”

“I’m a Crimson Demon! If you make me angry, I’ll blow you away with advanced magic!”

“You two shouldn’t have had much contact with each other, so why are you two fighting from the moment you meet!? Calm down!”

Megumin stepped in and prevented Arue from grabbing me.

“You must be one of Megumin’s classmates. I’m Darkness, of the same party as Megumin. I’ll only be in the village for a short time, but please take care of me.”

Saying that, Darkness extended her hand with a smile.

“My name is Arue, the number one author of the Crimson Demons. I’m relieved that onee-san seems to be a sensible person. Nice to make your acquaintance.”

Arue returned with a smile of her own, in complete contrast to the attitude she

showed me.

“Hey, why is there such a big difference in the treatment we are getting? And you sure are introducing yourself in a really grandiose way! Why don’t you tell me exactly how many authors there are amongst the Crimson Demons before calling yourself the number one?”

“Isn’t it obvious to proceed in a friendly manner with one of Megumin’s companions? I would’ve treated you the same way if you hadn’t hurt me before. As for the number of authors amongst the Crimson Demons, I have no comment.”

Arue said in a nonchalant manner.

“Oh yeah, come to think of it, I haven’t heard any of the Crimson Demon’s flashy introductions since I came here.”

“You know you only introduce yourself when you meet someone for the first time, right? By the way, I’m not doing that to you. You don’t seem like a good person.”

This girl has quite the tongue on her.

“I’ve heard that Megumin made a boyfriend, but don’t tell me this is the guy in question? Don’t think too badly of me for saying this, but it’s still not too late to go back to the Yunyun route.”

“Is that a declaration of war, you one eyed woman? You said you just released a book, right? If I find any of your books in a bookstore, I’m going to put them beneath other author’s books.”

Arue’s eyebrows twitched after hearing my words.

“Megumin, this man is no good! I’ll get rid of him right this instant!”

“Oh, you want to go? My Steal is pretty unique, you know? Don’t think that your eyepatch or panties will be safe!”

“If you two insist on fighting, then I’ll be your opponent! Don’t think that a high level Archwizard will have any trouble taking on a pair of NEETs!”

“I-I’m not a NEET!” x2

Part 3

That night.

“Waaaaaah! Bwaaaaah! Waaaaaah!”

Aqua came back to Megumin’s home in tears.

“What happened? Striking a few embarrassing poses shouldn’t be that traumatic after all the embarrassing stuff you did. Just what exactly did they make you do?”

I asked Aqua as she wailed on all fours.

...Looking closely, Aqua seems to be covered in mud.

“Uuu... uuu... Today’s trial was... ‘What a Crimson Demon needs above all is luck. You two can attempt this challenge as many times as you want until you pick the right door’, they said, before shoving us towards a series of doors...”

M-My condolences...

Could that be that event that often appears in Japanese game shows, the one where you get dropped into a pool of mud if you pick the wrong door?

Of all things, it had to be a trial that relies on luck. It’s pretty much the absolute worst fit for Aqua.

“Still, you managed to pass the trial, right? Good work, go ahead and take a bath. In the meantime, I’ll whip up some high quality snacks for you with my cooking skill.”

“...Shiokara would be nice...”

<TL Note: Shiokara: paste made from salted fermented seafood (squid, fish entrails, etc.) It’s generally considered a poor man’s dish.>

After requesting a surprisingly commoner-sounding dish, we sent Aqua off to the bath.

“Megumin’s mother, um... t-tonight...”

Darkness hesitantly started while sneaking glances at me.

“Don’t be so distant, just call me Yuiyui... Anyway, what about tonight? Darkness-san seems to be in heat tonight.”

“In heat!? No, I mean, could you not have Megumin and Kazuma sleep in the same room tonight...”

Darkness seems strangely conscious about that today. Is it because of this afternoon’s date?

“Why should they not? Do you want to have a secret rendezvous or something?”

“Secret rendezvous!? No, of course not! It’s just, a lot of things happened today, so thinking that they’ll share a room on this day gives me a sense of alienation...”

Saying that, Darkness glanced at me as if she was signalling me to back her up...

Megumin tilted her head.

“Did something happen today?”

“Not at all. Darkness just got carried away on her own.”

“Wha—!? Hey, Kazuma, after going on that date, that’s a little-”

The moment Darkness turned around, Yuiyui started chanting magic behind her back-

“-Yahoo! It’s a fourteen year old girl’s bed!”

“You little- Why must you bring focus to that of all things?”

After dragging away the soundly sleeping Darkness and whipping up the snacks, Megumin and I retired early.

“It’s a 14 year old’s bed, you know? A 14 year old, not a 15 year old’s. It’s a very precious thing, so I thought I should say it out loud.”

“I really don’t get what the big difference is. Girls’ beds are all pretty much the same...”

I threw myself onto the bed the moment I entered the room and rolled up and down it.

“Well, if I were to start going into the specifics, we’d be talking until dawn, so let’s leave that to another day.”

“I’ve always had this impression, but you’re not a lolicon, right? You didn’t fall for me because I’m small, right?”

Megumin coldly stared down at me.

“How rude, I properly like huge breasts. Ones like what Darkness has are my ideal body type.”

“I didn’t ask the specifics of your ideal, but as long as you aren’t a lolicon... You seemed really happy to have Komekko and Iris look up to you, so I was a little worried...”

That’s because I like little sister characters. It’s not because I like little girls.

“Well, I feel like a war will erupt if I go into the specifics of that, so let’s leave it to another day.”

“I-Is that so... Well, I didn’t really care that much. Anyway, there’s not much else to talk about, so let’s hurry up and turn in.”

Saying that, Megumin slipped onto the corner of the bed, leaving a fair distance between us.

.....

“Say, why are you sleeping so far away from me? We’re already at the stage where we use arms and chest as pillows and the like, so is there really a need to hold back like this?”

“Of course there is, if I get close to you, you’ll end up having to bear with it, won’t you? I’m doing this so I won’t raise your hopes unnecessarily.”

Well...

“My hopes were already raised from the moment we ended up in the same bed, so it’s

a little too late for that.”

“Do men really think about nothing but that!? Something will end up interrupting anyway, so nothing will happen!”

Is she talking about the curse I brought up?

I got Aqua to cast Break Spell upon me repeatedly the other day despite her saying that she can’t detect any such curses hanging over me.

If nothing’s changed even after that, then...

“There is the possibility that the person who cursed me is the Demon King that even Aqua has trouble dealing with...”

“How frivolous could the Demon King be? Don’t you feel sorry to pile even more slanderous rumours upon the Demon King?

Megumin might say that, but if the Demon King really put such a curse upon me, I would’ve had no qualms about setting off right now to vanquish him.

Just then, just as I was thinking about that.

I felt something soft grab onto my right hand.

It seems like Megumin grabbed onto my hand under the blankets.

“Just holding hands is fine, right? You won’t start feeling pent up like this.”

Megumin shyly smiled at me.

She’s probably doing this as recompense after what I said about the distance between us, but...

“Of course I will, what are you talking about?”

“Even this!? Er, well, my heart’s starting to beat really fast too, but if you have to say, shouldn’t this be more comforting?”

She doesn’t get it. She doesn’t get it at all.

“Since you’re so afraid of loneliness, we can hold hands while we sleep tonight, but you really should pay more attention to yourself. Don’t do this with anyone else. They’ll definitely get the wrong idea and eat you up.”

“There’s no way I’ll end up in this situation with anyone else! Why are you using that ‘Ahh, it’s a good thing I’m such a gentleman’ tone of voice!?”

Saying that, Megumin tightened her grip...

“Ouch, that hurts! Your level is a lot higher than mine, so be careful! You might end up crushing my hand if you use too much force!”

“There’s no way my strength would be that monstrous! Actually, you should really raise your levels. I’ll go with you on as many monster extermination quests as you want.”

Raising my levels, huh...

“Even if you say that, do you understand the pain of not seeing your status rise even though you leveled up? Recently, apart from my luck, my stats barely rise at all. Having more skill points is nice and all, but as a NEET, there aren’t that many skills that are beneficial to my lifestyle. I’m having trouble finding the motivation to level up...”

“You’re reaching your stat cap, huh... Hmm, well, there are several expensive potions that can permanently raise your stats. We can defeat monsters and use the money we earn to buy those potions and get stronger that way...”

“Rather than using such potions on me, wouldn’t it be better to use it on people who are already talented in the first place? It’s not like these potions grow on trees, right?”

Megumin fell silent for a moment.

“...Then, we can at least do something about your equipment...”

“My strength isn’t very high, so there aren’t that many items that I can properly use.”

While still holding onto my hand, her hand started moving in a pseudo-petting motion, as if she was trying to comfort me.

“...You’re pitying me, aren’t you?”

“N-No, if there’s anything I can do, feel free to tell me. That includes when someone bullies you. Anytime I run into an adventurer who calls you weak, I’ll make sure to pick a fight with them and respond with, ‘Seems like you are the weak one,’ when I beat them...”

“Stop doing that! So that’s why adventurers I never met before were calling me Weaklingma-san who needs a girl to protect him!”

That’s just like her, but I’d really wish she’d spare a thought for my feelings before doing those sort of thing.

“But you and Darkness got angry when I was being made fun of today, didn’t you? So why can’t I get angry when you are being made fun of?”

Megumin said with a smile.

It’s almost like she was teasing me.

...This just happened not too long ago, so I can’t really say anything...

“I was really happy when you two got involved in the fight, you know? The way things were going, I would’ve lost due to being outnumbered. Well, if I did lose, I would’ve sent my thanks each night to the houses of those who teased me that day...”

I’m really glad I intervened when I did.

“Anyway, who’s going to be Yunyun’s partner for tomorrow’s trial? The first two trials were just them playing around, but the last trial is going to be pretty tough. The most important trait that we Crimson Demons as modified humans need is the ability to survive in any battlefield. The last trial would be to survive a night in the forests where the strong monsters make their nest.”

And suddenly they brought out a trial that actually felt like one instead of being some kind of prank.

“...They sure became serious all of a sudden. Darkness can withstand a lot of attacks, but she can’t land her blows, and it’d be really bad if Yunyun ran out of mana. And Aqua would probably just attract a horde of undead if she were to spend a night in the forest...”

“Before you say it, I can’t let you, with your black hair and eyes, compete while the ninnin is still wandering around out there.”

“...Should we search for a Crimson Demon to be Yunyun’s partner tomorrow?”

“Don’t do that. Walking around and asking if anyone would be Yunyun’s friend would be like some sort of punishment. She’ll probably cry.”

At the end of the day, it’d really be best for me to go out there. It’s not like we have any other alternatives.

With judicious use of Enemy Detection and Lurk, spending a night in the woods is entirely possible.

And it seems like Megumin figured out what I was thinking.

“You can’t, okay? The one out for you is the Bomber Majin. Aqua can’t resurrect you if you get blasted to ashes by a Detonate.”

“Even if you say that, we don’t have anyone else to partner with Yunyun. You’re also keeping quiet about the Bomber Majin so that Yunyun’s chieftain’s trial won’t be disrupted, right?”

Yeah, she’s spending every day in the cells for the sake of her friend.

“...That’s not true at all. Didn’t I tell you before? By keeping quiet about ninnin, I can take him down before anyone else and steal the position of Chief that way.”

“Oh, that’s a tsundere alright.”

Just then.

Megumin raised her head from under the blanket.

“...It’s true that Yunyun is a very important friend. From a purely pragmatic standpoint, rather than me who doesn’t want to get too far away from Axel, or the others who aren’t that into it, Yunyun is best suited to be the chief. But...”

With her bright red eyes staring straight at me, she said,

“Whenever I see you risking your life for someone else, I feel really jealous for some reason.”

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“Say something! Keeping silent just makes me feel embarrassed!”

“I’m the one who’s embarrassed! What are you saying!? My face is getting hot enough to cook eggs, so can you please cut it out!?”

The two of us let go of each other’s hands as we hastily turned away from each other.

“Anyway, don’t participate in tomorrow’s trial, okay!?”

“Yeah, yeah, I get it! There’s no way I can participate after you gave me such a passionate appeal. We’ll think of some other way.”

“Passionate appeal!? Er, I can’t deny that it isn’t passionate, but... Ah, nevermind, we have to get up early tomorrow, so let’s hurry up and sleep already.”

Perhaps to hide her embarrassment, Megumin ducked beneath the blankets...

As for me...

“Hey, weren’t we going to sleep while holding hands tonight? I want to sleep while holding onto a 14 year old girl’s hand all night.”

“You’re really great at ruining the mood!”

Part 4

Early next morning,

The Megumin who thought so much about her friend and tribe yesterday is currently...

“You foolish Crimson Demons! I’ll lay waste to this entire village!”

Scuffling with the Defense Corps.

“I told you when we let you out of the cells yesterday! If you cause another scene with your Explosion, you’ll be tossed into the cells until the chieftain’s trial is over! So behave yourself! Gurk, I’m pretty high level too! Even if you strangle me like that...”

“She’s starting to chant! Cover her mouth! Don’t let her chant!”

“Watch out, she’s really strong! Think of her as a rabid beast!”

“Ahhh! Bukkoroli! Hey, get Megumin’s hands off him! Bukkoroli is foaming from the mouth!”

The members of the Defence Corps were pushed to the limit trying to restrain the high leveled Megumin.

I’ve thought this about Darkness too, but I can’t shake the feeling that this party would do better if they just fought with their fists.

“Yunyun! Go ahead and attempt your final trial or whatever while I’m in jail! But don’t think you’ve won yet! If you still aren’t chief by the time I get out, I’ll take over that position!”

“Megumin, please let go of Bukkoroli! Otherwise we’ll need to use Resurrection!”

As I was watching Megumin getting dragged away, I turned to the dumbfounded Yunyun...

“Anyway, about Yunyun’s final trial...”

“I’m definitely not participating.”

Aqua instantly rejected.

“I-I... Erm... Well...”

Darkness mumbled, but it's clear she isn't keen on being her partner either.

“Why are the three of you so calm? Megumin is getting dragged away again, you know!?”

Yunyun seems like she wants to say something, but we are already used to it.

More important is the fact that the other two declined to participate.

Well, it's not that much of a surprise, I suppose. Not only is it the infamous Crimson Demon trials, but this is also the toughest one out of all of them.

“...I was Yunyun's partner during the first trial, and Aqua was her partner during her second trial, so wouldn't it be fitting for our leader Kazuma to be her partner for the third trial?”

“Darkness is saying something great for once. Yeah, let's leave it to Kazuma who hasn't done anything up till now.”

Aqua swiftly agreed to Darkness's proposal, but,

“Unfortunately, I can't participate. Moguninnin is around, after all.”

“Seriously, what is a Moguninnin?”

Go ask the Crimson Demons who named him, not me.

“Well, personally, I really want to take the trial, but after everything Megumin said to me, it'd be a jerk move to ignore her and participate anyway. Though, I do think it'd definitely go smoothly if I joined up...”

“Aaa... But I have no one else to ask other than Kazuma-san...”

Yunyun seemed on the verge of tears as she said that.

“Well, I do know of one guy who'll definitely let you clear that trial.”

“This is the divine relic Aegis.”

<“Just like what he said, my name is Aegis. My hobby is rating girls and my special skill is enraging others. Nice to meet you.”>

“Er... H-Hello.”

I introduced Yunyun to the dancing and singing divine relic, Aegis.

“D-Divine relic... Hey, Kazuma, what are you saying? This set of armour is a divine relic?”

Darkness looks bewildered upon seeing the armour spew out a constant stream of words in front of her.

<“Hmm? This blonde lady seems familiar... Oh, I know, it’s that girl with that erotic body who appeared in the beauty contest! Yo, ojou-san, I’m Aegis. You’re wearing some pretty good armour. Wanna polish them together someday?”>

“What’s with this vulgar suit of armour? Kazuma, is this thing really a divine relic?”

“Don’t ask me, ask Aqua. And he himself says he’s a divine relic.”

“Hey, Kazuma, I don’t know anything about this. Don’t just push everything to me.”

Aqua replied in a slightly vexed manner after I directed the conversation towards her.

<“Hmm? I think I’ve seen you somewhere before. Strange. Even though she’s a beauty, I don’t have any reaction towards her at all. Say, onee-chan? Are you human? Or perhaps you are a man? You’re not packing anything down there, are you?”>

I really wanted to tell them that they should know each other very well.

After triggering Aegis’s weirdo sensor, Aqua started kicking at the suit of armour.

Yunyun tilted her head and asked.

“Can I really pass the trial for sure if I teamed up with him?”

“Skills and magic doesn’t work on him, and on top of that, his entire body is made out

of orichalcum. The final trial is to spend a night in the forest, right? He is tougher than Darkness and constantly boasts about having an impenetrable defence, so I think you'll be fine with him."

Aigis is an autonomous artifact. He can stay up all night and would be able to protect her even if they were ambushed.

<"What did you want me to do? Sorry, but I have an appointment to be the figurehead of the mixed hot springs tonight. I need to protect those naked and defenceless oneechans from the shadows.">

"Just so you know, the mixed hot springs are neither mixed nor hot springs."

<"Are you kidding me?">

Just then, Darkness gently tugged upon my sleeve.

"Kazuma, will he really be of use? Sure, he looks tough, but I can't help but worry about leaving him and Yunyun alone together."

<"Oh, I can't let that slide. Do you doubt my abilities? In that case, why don't you try me on yourself? Nothing beats the hands on experience. You won't want to wear anything else after trying me on.">

Aigis defiantly declared. Seems like armours have their own sense of pride too.

"Grr... Fine, if you're going to go that far, I'll try you on. I'm fairly experienced when it comes to armours too."

<"That's more like it. But don't come crying to me afterwards. My internal structure changes to fit its wearer, creating a perfect fit to ensure maximum performance at all times.">

This conversation is starting to seem like some sort of contest.

"In other words, it'd be just like an order made suit of armour!? Now you've got my expectations up. Don't disappoint me now."

<"Now then, to start with, you need to strip. It might be a little embarrassing, but your underwear needs to go too. It's necessary in order to ensure maximum performance.">

.....

“I-Is that so... W-Well, it’s just a piece of armour. It’d be stranger to be concerned about it... Let’s just go over there...”

“You didn’t have any issues back when you made Eris-sama wear you, did you?”

<“Don’t say that now! This girl was this close to falling for it!”>

“I-I’ll break you to pieces!”

An indignant Darkness joined Aqua in whaling on Aegis.



Just then.

“U-Um, Aigis-san, I have a request!”

<“What is it, big breasted onee-chan? Go ahead and say it.”>

Yunyun, even though she’s blushing from the sexual harassment, stood in front of Aigis with a serious expression.

“W-Would you be my partner for today’s trial!?”

<“Is that like inviting me on a date? As you can see, I’m a little preoccupied right now. Do you mind stopping this muscle headed girl?”>

“Yunyun, this guy is no good! Let’s think of another method! For example, it’s a little unfair, but how about having Aqua, Kazuma, and me take it in turns to help you...”

Aqua whispered into my ears after hearing Darkness’s words.

“Hey, Kazuma, you should be a little more prudent. Look, the pure and upright noble lady is now saying saying such things.”

“It’s not my fault, she recently even started to learn how to abuse her power. I’m sure her true nature as a noble has awakened.”

“Oh, shut up! In the first place, we already changed partners between trials. Was it ever written down that you can’t change partners within a trial? If there isn’t...”

Aqua once again whispered to me.

“Look, Kazuma, Darkness is even saying the same type of sophism that you come up with.”

“Don’t just blame everything on me. I’m not this devious.”

Darkness glared at us with tears in her eyes.

“...No, I want to have a proper trial. Then, this time, Megumin will...”

Interlude

The one who will become the chief of the Crimson Demons

The final trial is to survive spending a night in the forest where strong monsters make their nest.

<“Oh, the brilliant me had a great idea. Ojou-chan, register this place as a teleport destination and let’s spend the night at some other town. We’ll teleport back here at dawn. The forest is really scary at night... Actually, you could just scream and cry and have the judges let you off!”>

“Kazuma-san suggested the same thing when he heard about what this trial would be. But I won’t cheat. I want to become the chief with my own strength...”

<“It’s honestly kind of shocking that Kazuma had the same idea.”>

—Becoming the chief of the Crimson Demons.

For me who never had many ambitions or dreams, that was my only goal.

On the day my magic power and intelligence were measured, they praised me and said that I really was the chief’s daughter.

That made me really happy.

From that point on, aiming to become the chief just felt natural to me.

<“Say, Ojou-chan, why are pretty girls so soft? Why do they smell so nice? I think I should study that and write a paper on that subject. I’m sure it’ll be an asset to this world.”>

“I think it’s fine to do whatever you like, but why did you bring it up all of a sudden?”

I was walking towards the depths of the forest together with Aigis-san.

<“Nah, it’s fine if you don’t get it. Say, ojou-chan, do the people around you ever call you dense and a poor judge of character?”>

“I don’t think so...”

Well, not exactly...

<“For armour type divine relics like me, it’d be better for there to be someone inside me, don’t you think? Like, you pry open this armour and a pretty girl is inside! I think the customers would be very happy to chance upon such a gap.”>

“I don’t really get what you mean by customers, but is that the case?”

To guard against sudden attacks from monsters, I’m currently within Aigis-san.

“Aigis-san, is it really fine for you to be fooling around out here? Aren’t divine relics created by the gods to fight against the Demon King?”

<“Hmm? But that’s boring. I mean, sure, if a pretty onee-chan is about to be subjected to the Demon King’s perverted tastes, I’ll go save her, but there isn’t any hint of that. Not to mention that the Demon King Army’s demon girls and monster musumes are pretty appealing. I’m having trouble deciding which side I’d rather be on.”>

The gods created Aigis-san for a very important purpose.

But Aigis-san seems to be quite self-centered...

“I’ve heard that the Demon King Army’s ultimate goal is the eradication of humanity. Wouldn’t the pretty ladies be wiped out too?”

<“Well, yeah, that’d be a problem~. In that case, I’ll get as many of the pretty girls I can find and have them stay by my side so I can protect them. That way Eris-sama wouldn’t be angry too. Sadly, my new master is just too hard headed to get along with.”>

Divine relics are supposed to be created with a grand purpose in mind, but he seems quite free-spirited...

<“Anyway, that’s enough about that, what do you plan to do after becoming chief? How about making a law to have the robes of the Crimson Demons extend for no more than five millimeters from the waist?”>

“I won’t do that! I’ll be kicked out from the first day!”

What I plan to do after becoming chief.

First off, gather up monsters with high intelligence, tame them and make them my friends...

<“Well, if you want to be chief that badly, I’m sure you have a dream that can’t be accomplished without becoming chief. How about letting me in on it? Do the Crimson Demons have some great secret?”>

...

“I don’t have any such dreams that requires me to become chief to accomplish. And, even stuff I want to do...”

<“Eh? You’re kidding! Then there’s no need for us to try this hard, is there? Why don’t we live a little more enjoyable life? How about coming with me on my journey to befriend beautiful women all over the world?”>

“That sounds nice! Ah, I don’t really care about the beautiful women part, but travelling around the world and befriending a lot of people...”

No, that’s not right.

I’m the one who will become the chief of the Crimson Demons.

That’s been my goal ever since I was young...

<“To be honest, I didn’t expect them to accept me as a partner. You Crimson Demons really are a free-spirited bunch, aren’t ya? I was really surprised when a bunch of them froze the lake just so they could go fishing for wakasagi in this season. Aren’t there more worthwhile ways to use your powers?”>

<TL note: Wakasagi: Japanese pond smelt. Usually only caught during early spring when the ice starts melting and water temperatures are just slightly above zero.>

I really didn't want to hear this from Aigis-san, but yes, Crimson Demons are, as a general rule, a free-spirited bunch.

In the past, I had a close friend who was called the number one genius of the Crimson Demons whom everyone had great hopes for.

That stupid close friend who ignored everyone's hopes and expectations, pursued her own dreams, and ended up getting referred to as the idiotic worst mage.

Even so, she has loads of fun every day, made plenty of companions and friends and even found a man she loves, an extremely stupid and important-

<"Oh boy, monster right ahead! Ojou-chan, go ahead and let loose with your magic! Don't worry about running out of mana, I, Aigis-san, shall protect you...">

"Leave it to me! I'm the one who will become the Chief of the Crimson Demons! Combat is my greatest talent!"

I wonder what would've happened if Megumin had seriously set her sights on becoming chief.

If someone else had set their sights on becoming chief. If someone else had asked me to let them have that position...

<"That's the way, Ojou-chan! I really love girls like you! The first enemy is a One-strike bear. I really hate them. Their attacks really hurt...">

"I'll do my best not to leave even a scratch on your armour! Leave the offense to me!"

<"Ooh! How reliable! This is the first time I've had a spellcaster inside me, but could it be that we have amazing compatibility? Say, Ojou-chan... No, my friend Yunyun, after this battle is over-">

Aigis-san is saying something, but before that-

"INFERNO!!"

Sticking out one hand, I unleashed my magic on the One-strike Bear in front of me-

“...I can’t use magic or skills when I’m wearing you, Aigis-san...”

<“Yeah. To a spellcaster, I’m a surprisingly worthless piece of junk.”>

“A-Anyway, what were you saying just now? I recall you saying something about amazing compatibility and being my friend!”

<“Ah, sorry, that was nothing. Anyway, do something about Kuma-chan here.”>

“No, you definitely said something! I definitely heard you call me your friend! There’s no way I could’ve misheard that!”

<“What’s with this girl!? Did I step on a landmine? Anyway, do something about this bear! Even if you can’t use magic, you’re still a high level Archmage, right!? My defence is stupidly high, so please do something!”>

Right, now’s not the time to be talking about unnecessary stuff. I need to focus on taking down the enemy right in front of me...

“Oh, yeah, that’s why I have my dagger... Ah, but that’s an important memento from my first shopping trip with a friend...”

<“Are you okay!? Is this girl right in the head!? Hey, once we’re done here, can you get out of me for a moment? Let’s start things over from the beginning!”>

—Once this trial is over, this time, I’ll be able to tell my rival that it’s my victory this time.

And, together with that, I’ll tell her what I’ve never been able to...

“My name is Yunyun, an Archmage who wields advanced magic...”

I was able to come this far because I had a friend like you.

My shallow ambition only became important to me because of you...

It's only because a far stronger person than me is so doggedly pursuing her dreams despite the mockery of everyone.

Thank you for being my rival—!

“The strongest spellcaster amongst the Crimson Demons, and the one who will eventually become chief!”

<“It's ringing inside me! It's really ringing! Hey, hurry up and get out of me, Ojou-chan! Otherwise I'll get shaken to pieces!”>

Chapter 4

A Conclusion for these Fated Rivals!

Part 1

Yunyun came back, extremely fatigued, at the crack of dawn.

The sounds of magic that rang throughout the night narrated the severity of trial.

Apparently, whenever Yunyun would run out of mana, she would take a break inside Aegis to recover before continuing to fight.

Normally, for the final trial, two Crimson Demons will take turns sleeping and use their high mana and offensive capability to push through as a way of compensating for the difficulty of this trial.

Additionally, Yunyun could also use intermediate magic.

She could use spells with lower mana costs to deal with weaker enemies. This trial is truly one where her abilities shine to the fullest.

While Aegis was also with her, he didn't have much offensive power, so Yunyun might as well have overcome the trial on her own.

At the sight of her-

"Chief! Chief!"

"I always knew that Roaring Thunder Yunyun would make it someday!"

"Hey Yunyun, we're friends aren't we? Let's go hunting in the forest next time!"

"This is a joyous occasion! Tonight is the birth of the strongest chief!"

On the evening of the day the next Crimson Demon Chief was decided.

Yunyun slept like a log after the ordeals of the trial. By the time she woke up, the entire village was having a festival in the middle of the village square.

“Ahahahahahaha! Hey Kazuma, look at this! Megumin is multiplying!”

The already wasted Aqua pointed at Megumin and laughed.

“I am not multiplying! Aqua, you drank too much! Darkness, please stop her...”

The only one not drinking, Megumin, looked to Darkness for help—

“The Dustiness House will not give in! I have resistance to poison as well. There’s no reason to decline such a challenge!”

“That’s the spirit! Now, now, drink with me, Darkness-san! If I lose, I won’t meddle any further with my daughter’s and Kazuma’s relationship!”

The person in question has a bright red face and is currently being offered alcohol by Yuiyui.

It seems like she’s already drunk quite a bit. It’s not anywhere near Aqua’s level, but she’s staggering a little.

This is the last night Megumin and I will be spending here.

It seems like Yuiyui is trying to get Darkness dead drunk so that she couldn’t get in our way when we cross the line.

“Why don’t you drink as well? Even Darkness who usually stops you is already drunk.”

“Ugh... I’d very much like to do that, but...”

Megumin’s being surprisingly restrained today.

She is always clamouring to be treated like an adult and be allowed to drink alcohol, and Darkness would always stop her citing her small body size, but today...

Just then.

“So this is where you were, Megumin! We finally caught you!

Funifura and Dodonko, who approached without us noticing, collapsed onto Megumin.

“Wh-what are you doing? Are you two drunk!? After taking out all those powerful targets, my level is far higher than the both of you! If you don’t mind getting thrown around, then feel free to come at me!”

“Come talk with us for a bit! It’s about time you come clean with how far you’ve gone with that guy!”

“Yeah, yeah, you’re always so arrogant! We’ve never seen you act like a maiden at all! How did you, the one with the least sex appeal out of all of us, end up like this!?”

It seems these two are curious about our relationship.

“I wouldn’t mind talking about such things when you’re sober, but this isn’t something that makes good conversation while drinking! Come on, Nerimaki and Arue are over there, go play with them instead!

“You’re so cold! You hardly ever come back to the village, so hang out with us a little while you’re here!

“Yeah, yeah! And could you introduce us to some male friends of yours too!? It’d be too cruel to ask Yunyun to introduce us to her friends!”

“You guys are some really troublesome drunks! Don’t let Yunyun hear you, she’ll cry!”

While Megumin was being tied up by those two girls, there was a girl who was being fawned over much more than her over at the center of the square.

“—Chief! Chief!”

“Chief! Chief!”

“W-Wait! I’m only the next in line. You’ll make my father sad!”

Yunyun blushed from the praise being showered onto her by the crowd of Crimson Demons.

Despite the blush, there’s no mistaking her joy.

And next to her was...

<“How do you do! I’m the one that became one with your next chief in line, Aigis!”>

The divine relic that loves sexual harassment was striking a pose as if he was the protagonist.

“Aigis-san! Please don’t put it like that! I just went inside of you!”

<“That’s right, you just went inside me and exerted yourself, right!”>

Aigis’s misleading words stirred up the current chief, who is also Yunyun’s father.

“Wh-What is the meaning of this? I don’t remember raising a daughter who would let inanimate objects do as they please with her body!”

“Father what are you saying!? Aigis-san too, please don’t put it in such a weird way...!”

Yunyun hastily tried to stop them, but Aigis continued to tease the chief.

<“Your daughter smelled really good, it was just the best! Also, her body temperature was high, so it was really warm.”>

“Lightning Strike!”

The chief lost it and let loose a spell.

However, the lightning that suddenly descended only grazed the surface of Aigis.

<“I’m resistant to magic you know. But I understand your grief, father! Don’t hold back and hit me as much as you’d like!”>

“D-D-D-Don’t call me fatherrrrrrrr!”

The agitated chief went to hit his opponent, but of course, Aigis is a suit of armour.

“Gurk, m-my hand...!”

The chief grabbed his hand as he crouched down.

<“Are you alright father? I’m sorry, but I’m made of orihalcum. Also, your daughter was very soft!”>

“Raaaaaargh!”

“Aigis-san, please stop teasing my father!”

As I watched the figures of Yunyun and the chief being led around by the troublemaking armor, Funifura, who was pestering Megumin, spoke up.

“Hey, Dodonko, Yunyun and that armoured man are getting on really well!”

“You’re kidding me! Not only Megumin, but her too!?”

Before I could tell them that the inside of that armour was empty, they both rushed to Yunyun’s side.

“Hey, what’s the meaning of this! You look so innocent, but you’re actually doing stuff like this behind our backs!?”

“You keep talking about making friends this and making friends that, but you seem to have no problem making boyfriends! Hey, Yunyun, we’re friends, right!? Please, introduce me to a cool onii-san!”

<“Now, now, ladies, don’t quarrel over little old me.”>

“I have no idea what the two of you are saying! Please calm down! Also Aigis-san, stop butting in!”

Despite being teased by a lot of people, Yunyun had a certain cheer in her voice and

seemed to be enjoying the situation.

“Hey now Aqua, Darkness, you’ll catch a cold if you sleep here... You too mother, please wake up. If you’re going to sleep, please do it at home.”

I wonder if it’s her position as an older sister that made her good at looking after others or if it was something innate to her personality. Megumin was trying to awaken the people who passed out drunk.

“Komekko, are you sleepy because you stuffed yourself? I’m sorry, but please help me carry your mother home.”

“That’s a pain, just leave her here and go home. I’ll ask father to come here later...”

“Komekko, no matter how much of a pain they are, you shouldn’t just leave your parents alone!”

Standing close to the bonfire in the middle of the square, the now plump Komekko curled up into a ball and fell asleep.

Sighing at the sight of her little sister, Megumin started putting blankets on the drunks, seemingly having given up on the idea of taking them home.

Eventually, everyone was wrapped in their own blanket.

Megumin looked upon them with a wry smile, before her gaze slowly shifted over to where the Crimson Demons and Aegis were still messing around with Yunyun.

I moved closer to Megumin.

“Are you sure you don’t want to join them?”

“If I go there now, I’m sure I will be compared to Yunyun. I’m already being known as the joke mage, so I’m not going to go out there just to be made fun of. Besides, that loner of a girl being surrounded by everyone like that is a pretty unusual event for her. It seems all the hard work she put in really paid off.”

Megumin talked as if it was completely unrelated to her, while happily looking at Yunyun.

“So she finally surpassed me.”

Her tone was cheerful, but she seemed a little lonely as she said that...

“...So, is your rivalry finally settled with this?”

“Of course not, our gap as rivals just got larger, is all. Someday, I’ll achieve something that’ll make all the Crimson Demons envious. Say... taking down the Demon King with my party, for example?”

“I definitely won’t go with you on that one, ok? No matter how much you cry or scream or tantrum, I’m definitely not doing that.”

As I firmly decided this, she looked my way and said:

“Then how about this, if we defeat the Demon King, I’ll do anything you want.”

.....

“Did you just say anything...”

“I said it, didn’t I? Anything means anything.”

Why is this girl always throwing me curveballs? Why won’t she just give it to me straight?

“But Megumin is unexpectedly a pretty easily tricked girl, so I get the feeling that you’ll still let me do a lot of things even if we don’t defeat the Demon King.”

“Please don’t call me easily tricked, I’m pretty conscious about that. I used to be a much sharper girl in the past, so how did things turn out like this...”

Despite being the one who suggested that, Megumin blushed all the way to her ears.

“Say, Megumin, you still haven’t done your daily routine today, right?”

“Yeah. I was going to fire it off in the sky during the climax of the celebration, to give all those drunks a surprise...”

This girl thought of a pretty troublesome prank.

“It’s a rare celebration for Yunyun, so why don’t you just let it slide tonight?”

“It’s precisely because it’s my rival’s celebration...”

Yunyun’ll probably cry if her celebration got cancelled because of that.

Eventually, Megumin muttered “Oh fine,” and shrugged her shoulders.

And as she once again looked towards her rival from a distance, I said.

“Say, how about we sneak out of here together?”

“...Do you want to do perverted things that badly? Really, this guy...”

“T-That’s not it!”

Dammit, is this because of my usual behaviour?

I’m a little angry at that small part of me that thought that it’d be fine if it ended up that way too.

“Then what do you plan on doing after we sneak out? If we go missing under such circumstances, we’ll definitely be teased about it tomorrow...”

Megumin looks a bit troubled.

However, at the same time, she was sporting a slight smile.

It doesn’t seem like she’s entirely against it.

...Taking down a Demon King is impossible but...

I think I could at least shorten the gap between these two rivals.

“...?”

Megumin tilted her head at my silence.

“Let’s go do your daily routine right now!”

I said with a smile.

Part 2

The area around the Crimson Demon village is inhabited by strong monsters.

On top of that, nocturnal monsters are supposed to be stronger in general.

If you have to ask why I am remembering such things now—

“Hahahahahahaha! Look Megumin, the One-Strike bear is multiplying!”

“It’s not multiplying! Kazuma, how much did you drink just now!?”

In the forest close to the village, Megumin and I were being chased by a monster.

“I did drink a little, but I’m not drunk, so it’s fine!”

“It doesn’t look the least bit fine at all! If it was the usual you, you would surely be screaming at the sight of the One-Strike bear!”

With the help of the night vision from Farsight and my Escape skill, I was able easily run away with Megumin in tow.

“Hey, hey, little bear, are you scared!? I am Kazuma! Catch me if you can!”

“You’re drunk aren’t you? You’re actually very, very drunk, aren’t you?”

“Rooooooooooooooooooar!!”

I turned around to face the furball chasing me.

“Snipe!”

“Rawr!?”

What I’m doing right now is running in the dark at full speed while firing arrows behind me.

It’s a high difficulty technique, but I’m able to pull it off.

“Behold Megumin! This is the true power of the Hero Kazuma! What do you think, isn’t it cool??”

“It looks cool! It looks very cool, so please keep running! Where did you hit it? It looks like you really pissed it off!”

As expected only from someone with a high level, Megumin’s easily keeping up with me.

“Oh, it’s a male isn’t it. I struck its sweet spot!”

“Now’s not the time for that! What have you done!?”

As soon as Megumin heard my words, she started chanting under her breath.

It seems like she intends to use the bear as her target for her daily routine.

However...

“Hold it right there, it’s way too early for that. You sure are a hasty one, aren’t you?”

“Mmff!?!... Fuua! Why did you interrupt me? It will catch up to us at this rate, you know!? Can’t I just blow that bear up!? It’s more than sufficient to be my target.”

Megumin, who I quickly silenced with my finger, was now shouting at me with tears in her eyes.

“That kind of small fry is not a suitable match for your magic. Explosion magic is the strongest magic, so don’t you misuse it!”

“What is with you tonight, Kazuma!? Did you get more drunk after running around!? Normally you’ll just tell me to get it over with!! Actually, if I don’t use it now, we’ll get done in by that small fry!”

I waved my finger in front of Megumin.

“Did you forget who I am? That’s right, I’m Kazuma, the one who possesses the Lurk skill!”

“It’s already found us! I’m begging you, please return to normal!”

Just like Megumin said, the Lurk skill is useless if the enemy has already spotted you.

However...

“Create Earth”

Using flashy magic in the forest at the dead of night would just attract more enemies.

With the handful of soil in my hand...

“Wind Breath!”

“Grah!?”

I gave the One-Strike bear that quickly gained upon us a taste of my long unused eye blinding combo.

Then, using the brief moment where it can’t see, I concealed myself...

“Hey, Kazuma... Wai—”

—While embracing each other in the darkness, Megumin’s tiny body trembled slightly every time our breaths touched.

("Heh... You said that you'll let me do anything to you just a short while ago, but you're getting tense now?")

("Of course I'm tense! Are you stupid!? Kazuma, are you seriously stupid? I'm tense because my life's on the line here!")

"Sniff, Sniff...!"

After losing sight of us, the One-Strike bear began using its nose to sniff us out.

("So, how is it Megumin? A date in the middle of the night just gets your heart pounding, doesn't it?")

("My heart is pounding! It has never pounded like this before! I'm begging you, please keep quiet!")

The One-Strike bear who just passed by near us was still sniffing around carefully.

However, the Lurk skill also works on odours.

We stood motionlessly hugging each other, and eventually the One-Strike bear left us.

"In the end, it's a mere beast... It was never a match for me."

"If you had that kind of confidence all the time, we'd be able to go on more adventures..."

After releasing my Lurk skill, I used Enemy Detection to check my surroundings.

"Ok, let's go this way, Megumin. I can sense the aura of a powerful monster over there."

"It doesn't have to be a powerful one! Just what is with you tonight? Even if you are drunk, this is way too strange!"

Megumin's the one who's strange, not me.

"You were the one who always said you loved going for the strong ones."

"Yes, I love going for the strong ones! However, that's when we are with everyone, and when Kazuma is acting with a clear head!"

Just then.

A ragged breathing could be heard coming from the darkness between the trees.

Along with that, a pair of shining blue eyes stared directly in our direction.

“Seems like it’s here. Now, I wonder if this one can properly satisfy me?”

“Stop saying stupid things and run, Kazuma!! Those blue eyes that shine in the dark! That is the lone wolf, champion of the forest, Fenrir!”

Exhaling a shimmering white cloud from its mouth, the giant, silver furred wolf casually approached us, seemingly not regarding us as a threat at all.

“Normally I would hunt you down for some pocket change, but it seems like you’re not the one I’m looking for tonight. I’ll let you off this time, so count your lucky stars...”

“Just where is all of that confidence coming from!? This is Fenrir you know!? This is an extremely high leveled enemy that wiped out even those veteran adventurers who were capable of dealing with the dangerous white wolves with ease!”

Seemingly understanding that I was provoking it, the Fenrir snorted in an annoyed manner.

As it slowly approached us, the undergrowth beneath it froze with a crackling noise.

“I see, you control ice. What a coincidence, I too command both water and ice. Would you like to see who is better?”

“There’s no way that your sorry Freeze spell can even compare! Oh, never mind, I’ll take care of this, so just buy me some time...”

Megumin began chanting after saying that, only to feel my hand land on her head with a boop.

“This is not your time to shine. Save that for later. Now then, little puppy, it’s about time we get started with our late-night ball. Won’t you dance with me!?”

“You would normally never say stuff like that! Seriously, just what it’s with you!? Though, it pains me to admit it, but it was actually a little cool!”

As I calmly got into a combat stance, the Fenrir started moving in response.

“...Kazuma, it’s looking down on you. It’s really looking down on you!”

Across from me, the Fenrir started scratching its neck with its hind leg.

No matter how you look at it, this isn’t something one would do in a battle...

“No, it’s not looking down on me, it’s trying to get me to lower my guard. Unfortunately, that’s not going to work. Create Water!”

I greeted the Fenrir with a gift of my water spell.

But instead of trying to dodge it...

“Kazuma, he seems like he’s enjoying it! Based off its attributes, the Fenrir should like water and ice! It thinks you’re giving it a bath!”

“Heh... if it’s that comfortable, how about another round? Create Water! Create Water!”

I continued blasting the Fenrir which seemed to be completely enjoying the experience.

As expected, it simply took the blasts without trying to dodge at all...

Just then, something changed.

Its feet is covered in a thick layer of ice.

It’s not thick enough to render it immobile, but it’ll definitely slow it down.

“Did you lower your guard because my level is lower than your? Too bad, but this match is already decided. Create Earth!”

“!?”

The Fenrir that seemed like it was enjoying itself a moment ago deftly jumped back to avoid the clump of dirt I threw at it.

As expected of a wolf. It could dodge such an attack easily.

However...!

“Didn’t I say this battle was already decided! Wind Breath!”

I threw the cloak that I was wearing and casted my spell in its direction.

Blown by wind magic, my cloak spread and proceeded to block its vision.

The moment it tried to evade that lump of earth, it should’ve realized how the ice on its feet was hindering its movements.

This time, the Fenrir couldn’t evade...

“Gra!”

“Bind!”

Just as it started scratching at my mantle with its forelegs, my metal wires entangled them.

“Gruu! Grrrrrrrrr, Frrrrrrrr!”

Finally recognizing me as a threat, the Fenrir struggled against by bind, but the metal wires I commissioned held firm.

“A-Aah... N-N-No way, to think that Kazuma could render a Fenrir powerless so easily...”

As I casually sauntered over to the immobile Fenrir, Megumin’s let out an awed voice from behind me.

“Well, that was pretty fun. It’s about time to finish this...”

Saying that, I moved in for the decisive blow.

“So cool...! Kazuma is really cool tonight...! But, even if you disabled it, it’s still dangerous to approach a Fenrir. You should safely finishing it off from a distance with your bow...”

In addition to her admiration for my achievement, Megumin gave me a word of caution, but...

“I don’t like picking on weaklings. This one is pretty good. It just picked a fight with the wrong person...”

“I-I thought you went crazy or something, but I think I fell in love with you all over again... But, Kazuma, you don’t have your sword...”

That’s right, I assumed we would only be running through the forest tonight, so I only brought along my bow.

However...

“If I don’t have a sword, then all I have to do is create one. Create Water!”

Water flowed out from my right hand.

“At the very least, I will finish you with an attack from your favourite element. Freeze...!”

“Ah... Aah... Aaaah...”

The water dripping from my right hand slowly changed from water to ice with a crack.

It was transforming to the form I had in mind.

“This is the true use of Freezing magic!”

“Th-That’s so cool! You’re so cool! Tonight’s Kazuma is just too cool!”

Megumin looked at me with the same eyes of admiration that she once showed to the Masked member of the thieving group.

I moved closer to Fenrir to deliver the finishing blow.

“Seems like my magic was superior after all. Now, it’s time for you to take an eternal rest—”

As it looked at me with a resigned look in its eyes, I brought down my blade of ice

towards its chest—

—While cloaked under my Lurk skill, I ran through the forest.

“I would like to take back those words I said about how cool you were tonight!”

As expected of a high level monster, that blade of ice didn’t even leave a scratch on it.

“Yeah, of course—, even if it’s made with magic, ice is still ice— Of course it wouldn’t pierce the fur of a boss level wolf—”

“Stop saying such carefree words and hurry up! A wolf’s sense of smell is especially good, so it might even sniff through your Lurk skill!”

After my attack failed, the Fenrir started struggling again and made it seem like it might get free at any time, so we left in a hurry.

Judging from the numerous howls come from behind, it seems like it’s still searching for us.

“Well, it really did look like it was my victory there... Plus I said I’d let him off before we fought, so finishing him off would go against my word.”

“Why are you being so positive!? Let’s go back already. It’s not just Kazuma who’s strange tonight, the forest itself is strange too! Fenrir is supposed to be living far deeper in the forest...”

Oh, I see, that’s how it is...

“It detected the presence of a strong enemy, that’s to say, me, and came all the way out here.”

“You drunkard!”

While Megumin was bad-mouthing me with tears in her eyes, my enemy detection skill picked up an even greater presence.

“I’m sensing an enemy even stronger than the Fenrir. Could this be it?”

“I give up already, do as you like! Now that it has come to this, I may as well accompany you ‘till the end! Even if my opponent is Fenrir, a dragon, or even the Bomber Majin...!”

I gave the now fearless Megumin a thumbs up as I smiled at her.

“Well said! Tonight’s objective is the Bomber Majin Mogunin. It’s time to blow away that thing with a festive sounding name”

“Please don’t shorten it to Mogunin, it feels like you’re messing up my name! No, wait, I might not be qualified to be asking this, but are you insane?”

Insane, is it?

After all this time, what’s this girl saying now?

“Unfortunately, I’m always surrounded by insane companions!”

“Oh, you’ve said it now! Fine, let’s do this! I finally understand what you’re thinking, Kazuma! You should’ve just told me at the start!”

The conditions for becoming the chief is to either successfully undertake the trial or take down a strong target.

There’s no need to let anyone know what happens tonight.

Only Megumin and I need know that she didn’t lose after all.

That’s right, a Demon King is impossible, but...

“Seriously, I really love you!”

“I’ve known that a long time ago! I’ve shown you how cool I can be with that Fenrir, now’s your turn!”

“Very well, I’ll show you a sight that befits the title of the Bomber Majin!”

Saying that, Megumin showed me an unblemished smile.



Part 3

My enemy detection skill is going off.

("Wait. It's close.")

I stopped right there and signalled Megumin to stop with my hand.

("...Kazuma, you can see in the dark, right? So why does your hand bump into my chest every time you let me know there's an enemy?")

("Even I'm not perfect, so just let it slide this once. Anyway, over there...")

While whispering, I pointed towards the centre of a huge clearing.

Wait, that...

("Ah, I see. That's why it's called ninnin.")

I thought they just named it with their usual Crimson Demon sensibilities, but now I kind of get why it's named like that.

("Is something the matter with ninnin? But, look at this Kazuma! That shiny luster, that unique form! I really want to take it home after defeating it!")

Standing right there was a bipedal robot.

If I have to describe it in one word, it would be ninja-like.

Its appearance seems optimized for covert operations and looks to be quite intelligent.

A shining red mono eye ominously illuminated it's surroundings. I was a little worried if it could see through my Lurk skill.

No, more importantly...

("I see, so Fenrir ran from that, huh. Well then, let's get started! After Kazuma went out of his way to bring me here, I'll definitely bring it down!")

Right now, I am beside an enthusiastic Megumin.

("...Say, why don't we just go back home today and come back tomorrow instead?")

("And then, I'll take the title of Bomber... What did you just say?")

I'm starting to question why exactly am I out in the forest in the middle of the night.

("Running around made me feel sick. I want to hurry back and go to sleep...")

("Are you seriously going to stop after coming this far? Just where did all your motivation and bravado disappear off to? Don't tell me you sobered up!? Of all times, you sobered up now!?")

Megumin grabbed my shoulders with both her hands and shook me back and forth.

("Hey, calm down, our opponent is a big shot that stymies even the Crimson Demon tribe. We should make some proper preparations...")

("I know it's dangerous! I warned you so many times! And preparations are something you should've done before coming out here! Isn't it too much to leave me hanging after getting my hopes up so much!?")

Getting shaken up is making me feel sick...

("You say that, but you keep doing the exact same thing! You always get me all worked up only to leave me hanging.")

("That might be so, I apologize for that. So it was always this tough on you, wasn't it? I'm sorry.")

Right in front of us stands the Bomber Majin.

The robot that was first discovered in the mysterious facility. I wonder if it was originally designed to protect the Crimson Demon Village.

I don't really understand why it prioritizes attacking any non Crimson Demons with black hair and eyes, but I figured someone from Japan must have done something to it.

In any case, that isn't important right now.

The important part is, it won't attack any Crimson Demons.

In other words, Megumin can boldly walk out alone and blow it away with Explosion Magic.

("Now that I get a close look at it, it's damaged all over. I wonder if it's from the Explosion a few days ago.")

Now that she mentioned it, its body is definitely covered with cracks. It looks quite run down.

The damaged portions were slowly healing with a slight scraping sound. It seems this guy also comes with self repair functions.

A robot that can withstand an Explosion, and could escape and repair itself if it's not destroyed in a single strike.

Now I understand why it wasn't exterminated even though it was living so close to the Crimson Demon Village.

("Alright, let's defeat this thing and go back to sleep. Here's the plan: You go out alone to face it, chant your magic, and blow it away. That is all.")

("Isn't that plan too dull! And what will you be doing...")

Just when Megumin said that.

("Blaugh.")

("...You're feeling sick because of all that running around, I see. Just sit there for now. I'll be counting on you to take me home afterwards!")

Unable to hold it in any longer, I fertilized the trees with the nutrients from my body.

Megumin averted her gaze.

("Well then, I am going. Please watch my cool performance.")

After saying that, Megumin left to face the Bomber Majin.

”—Bomber Majin Moguninnin. I’ve come to take that title from you...”

Even though she could just complete her chant and end the fight before it even began, Megumin decided to honourably name herself.

This was supposed to be a serious scene, but I just can’t feel any sense of tension with the name that the Crimson Demons gave it.

“My name is Megumin! I am a wielder Explosion Magic, and the strongest mage of Axel!”

The Bomber Majin won’t attack Crimson Demons.

She probably thought she had the leeway to act cool because of that.

As for why I know this, it’s because she’s been sneaking glances at me ever since she started.

She probably wanted to make sure I was watching her coolest moment.

“You might have been once called the guardian of the Crimson Demons, but we can’t have you attacking our tourists. We’ve been letting it slide since you were quietly living in the depths of the forest, but now that you’ve come all the way out here-”

—Just then,

The Bomber Majin disappeared in an instant.

Silence returned to the forest.

Then, in the trees above me-

It came falling down without a sound.

“Eh? Wai-!”

“Ka-Kazuma!?”

Even though I was sure I was hidden with Lurk, the ninnin came rushing towards me.

And what the heck is with that movement? It’s too fast!

It’s totally a ninja!

The one who made this is definitely Japanese, I just know it!

“You’re pretty good to be able to break through my Lurk skill! But how unfortunate for you, against a robot, I’m invincible! Steal!”

When going up against a machine, all I have to do is steal its vital parts!

As I extended my hand, the ninnin deftly jumped away.

Only the afterglow of its red monoe eye remained as it disappeared into the darkness.

The more I saw its cool moves, the more I feel sorry for the name that was given to it.

And what appeared in my hand is-

“Kazuma, now’s not the time to be messing around! If you want my panties that badly, I’ll wash it and give it to you later!”

The black panties of the person standing in front of me, Megumin.

“No, there’s no point if you wash... That’s not it, this guy was just too fast! Dammit, I already used that wire on Fenrir...”

Oh, that’s right!

“That’s it, underwear! Megumin, give me your bra too! If I tie it together with your panties, I can instantly make a substitute rope...”

“Are you still drunk!? There’s no way that will restrain it! Kazuma, behind you!”

I instantly threw my body to the side. At the same time, I heard the sound of something cutting through the air where my neck was just a moment before.

Before I noticed, the ninnin had circled around me and struck at me with its hand blade.

“Dammit, don’t think that ninjas are the only one who has the night as their domain! Night is also when NEETS are most active! Don’t think that you’re the only one who’s stronger here!”

By the time I turned around, it had already disappeared.

Does this guy also have the Lurk skill?

I really hate fighting people who fight covertly like me.

“You might have meant for that to be a cool line, but it’s not cool at all! You really did sober up, didn’t you!? It has none of the wit from before!”

“S-Shut up, just get to chanting already! I demand a do-over! My name is Satou Kazuma! Seeing through the dark and moving through the shadows, I’ve stolen a multitude of treasures. I am the guy that will shake the world!”

“I thought it was pretty cool for a moment, but that thing in your hands just completely ruins it!”

While Megumin was putting a damper on my introduction, I focused on increasing the accuracy of my Enemy Detection skill-

“There you are!!”

“!?”

Ninnin, who suddenly appeared behind my back, swung down his hand blade toward me, but I managed to stop it.

Since I did not have a sword on me, the thing I used to stop the attack was—

“You’re the worst! Agh, just what is it, are you being really cool tonight or not, I just don’t know!”

“Shut up, I’m being desperate here! If I can use it, I’ll use it!”

Stopping the blade with my hands might have been impossible, but the Crimson Demon Panty Block is pretty effective.

The rule about it not being able to bring harm to Crimson Demons seems to also apply to their possessions.

The ninnin that stopped in front of the black panties-

“Whoa!?”

Drove a rapid succession of palm strikes and kicks to my stomach.

Incidentally, it's arms and legs are made of metal.

“Kazuma!? Dealing with ninnin is too difficult after all! It moves too fast that I can't aim at it, and more importantly, I can't attack it because it won't leave your side!”

I spat out a sour liquid to intimidate ninnin.

Perhaps it's because robots hate acidic attacks, but it put some distance between us.

“Y-You're pretty good. I didn't expect you to actually stand up to me at blaaaargh-”

“Just give up on the cool speeches already!”

It's fine, this level of attack won't work on me...

The only reason why I'm vomiting is because we kept running around after drinking...!

“Sorry, it's actually working on me. This is bad... Megumin, I won't be able to move for a while, so forget about using magic and run back to the village... This guy will let you go, so wake up Aqua and let the other villagers...”

“There's no way I'll run away alone like that! Sorry, but I'm not good at listening to others!”

Megumin said such selfish words that would've been more fitting for a rebellious teenager and readied her staff in front of me.

In the meantime, I was clutching my stomach and hunched over.

The ninnin warily approached.

Eventually, it stuck its arm out at me and began making some sort of gesture-

Megumin threw her staff away and wrapped herself around me as if to cover me.

“First Aqua and now you, why don’t you guys ever listen! What are you going to do as a mage if you throw away your staff!?”

“That’s the stance the ninnin uses for its detonation magic. If a weakling like you get caught up in it, there wouldn’t even be a corpse left!”

Ah, I see.

She’s using the fact that it doesn’t attack Crimson Demons to protect me, huh?

...Just then.

With its hand still outstretched, the ninnin focused it’s red monoeye on me and started saying something.

<“Type: Cheat harem class Riajuu Japanese confirmed. Upon separation from modified specimen Crimson Demon, initiate Detonation clean-up.”>

<TL Note: Riajuu (リア充) is a Japanese online term that means “someone’s who’s satisfied with their real life” but is more commonly used to mean “Hot guy with girlfriend.” Previously the term was translated as “Chad”, but this case is a bit of an exception.>

“I just heard something that I can’t ignore! Cheat harem? Cheat harem you say!?! The goal of your creator was to wipe out all those cheat-having harem bastards!? If that’s the case, then aiming for me was a mistake, damn you!”

“I don’t know why you’re suddenly so angry, but please stay still!”

Megumin desperately tried to cover me with her tiny body as I struggled.

As I was feeling her rising temperature, I tried to think of a plan out of this stalemate.

Honestly, my chest hurts.

Judging from how it feels, I probably had a broken bone or two.

Yeah, it probably broke a couple of my ribs.

Still, why is it so hung up on performing its Detonation?

Even if it couldn't harm Crimson Demons, it should be more than capable of prying Megumin from me to deliver the killing blow.

"Megumin, why is it just standing still? It could easily kill me if it were to just attack."

"The Bomber Majin makes it's opponents explode, that's why it's called the Bomber Majin. Whenever it comes across a party full of girls lead by a guy with black hair and eyes, it would scream 'Go explode!' and blow them away! That's why it's so terrifying."

<TL note: Riajuu go explode! (リア充爆発しよ!) is a Japanese online meme that's basically their equivalent of "FUCKING NORMIES REEEEE!" Bomber Majin is basically that meme brought to life.>

"Isn't that just plain Riajuu hunting! How ridiculous! Megumin, protect me! I'm going to keep using Steal on it until I get its vital parts!"

"That's fine, but you won't accidentally target me instead, will you!? I'm not wearing panties right now, so there's nothing left! If you happen to steal my robe, my lower half will be completely nude!"

"I'll take responsibility when that happens! Here we go, Steal! Steal! Steal! Steal!"

Swiftly reacting to my voice, ninnin's figure suddenly disappeared from where it was.

However, in my right hand, something heavy was...

"Did I do it?"

"You've really done it this time! Please give me back my bra! If you took just one more thing, it would really have been a disaster!"

In my right hand was a black bra and some kind of component.

The sensation pressing against my back now felt slightly softer. Along with that, I

heard a soft clank.

I must have stolen one of its parts.

Quite some distance away, within the trees, Bomber Majin was down on one knee and looking at us.

“Dammit, so he can still move... This is bad, my chest and stomach hurts... I wonder if I can carry you back to the village like this...”

Ignoring my whining, Megumin picked up her staff and began chanting.

On the receiving end is the Bomber Majin, seemingly trying to escape while dragging one of its legs behind it.

“This village is really something else. I’m not coming back here anymore. Hey Megumin, don’t leave me. If you get too far, that thing is going to blow me up.”

Megumin, still stuck to my back, heaved a sigh.

“You were so cool just a few moments ago, and now you’re using a woman as a shield... Really, just why did I fall in love with such a guy...”

She might say that, but she doesn’t seem too displeased by it.

Megumin shifted her attention to the Bomber Majin.

“You weren’t originally like this. Just what happened to you? Even though you’ve taken some damage from my explosion, your movements were still way too clumsy.”

I came this close to dying out there. You’re kidding when you say it wasn’t at peak condition, right?

“...As a fellow explosion lover, I can’t hate you, but there’s no way I can overlook you setting your sights on my companion...”

With her staff firmy in hand, Megumin looked straight at the guardian that has protected the Crimson Demon Village for all this time and gave it a pained smile.

It was as if it was reacting to Megumin’s words.

Ninnin, who was dragging its legs around, suddenly stopped moving.

It's red monoeye flashed rapidly.

"Confirmed observation of the Maximum Magical Capabilities of the Crimson Demons. With the appearance of a being that have exceeded prior magic power predictions, the Modification project is judged a success. Now sending latest report to Noise Kingdom HQ. HQ, please respond. The project is a success. Please convey these results to the master-"

Just as it said something really interesting-

"Explosion!"

By the hands of someone with the same crimson eyes.

By the Crimson Demon mage hailed as the worst mage, the guardian of the Crimson Demon Village was sent to join the fallen Kingdom of Noise and its creator.

Part 4

"You really gave me a fright! Megumin, you really should stop doing such things!"

"Shut up, you NEET. That was a celebration for the next chief. If anything, you should be thanking me."

Right now, I'm in a place I'm getting more and more familiar with, the base of the Crimson Demon Defence Corps.

"Stop calling me a NEET! I'm not a NEET, I'm a member of the Defence Corps and don't you forget that! That aside..."

Bukkorori was lecturing Megumin who was currently in jail.

"Still, I didn't expect you, her guardian, to get involved in it too... Just when we starting to get along too... It's really a shame."

I too have been thrown into the same cell as Megumin.

“Bukkorori-san, I’m sorry. I felt like I was getting along well with you too... To make up for it, I’ll teach you a great way to pass time. It goes like this: you create ice using freeze and watch it as it melts. Before you notice it, a day would have already passed.”

“That’s a pretty good idea. I have a lot of free time everyday, so I’ll go try this out soon.”

“Please don’t get too chummy with each other! This is why NEETs are so... Can’t you spend your time doing something more worthwhile?”

Megumin interrupted me as we were trading NEET tips.

And then, Bukkorori sighed as he regarded Megumin.

“...I get that you’re upset over the gap between you and your rival now but... No matter how upset you are, you can’t just cast Explosion magic during her celebration.”

Megumin didn’t tell anyone about her victory over the Bomber Majin.

Thus, everyone is under the impression that she casted explosion because she was upset over Yunyun becoming the next chief in line.

If she told everyone the truth of what happened, her reputation as the worst, joke mage would’ve been erased...

“If you’re going to keep lecturing me, I have to say something as well. Do you remember SCKETTO, the one you always stalk? I heard that you made her cry by sexually harassing her and calling it punishment.”

“Just what are you saying? SCKETTO just seemed to be acting odd recently. The other day, she invited me to get my fortune told, but she made a bunch of inscrutable expressions in front of her crystal ball before chasing me out. Even a few days ago, she ambushed me while I was out on patrol, saying something about she’ll help me practice or the like.”

Bukkoroli protested with tears in his eyes.

Just then, a new visitor appeared.

“Why, if it isn’t Ms. Next Chief In Line. What is it? Have you come to laugh at me? If you want to laugh at how unsightly am I, then go ahead and laugh!”

“Ahahahahahahaha! Megumin is in jail! Ahahaha!”

“You really laughed at me! Fine then, we’ll settle it for real this time! Bukkorori, open the door right now!! If you don’t, I’ll let loose my Explosion right here!”

After pointing and laughing triumphantly at Megumin, Yunyun let out a sigh.

“Ha... Seriously, what have you done this time...? Umm, Bukkorori-san... I’ll keep watch on her, so could you let me talk to Megumin privately?”

“Fine with me. I may not look like it, but I’m actually pretty busy.”

“I bet you’re just going to stalk Soketto again under the guise of patrolling around.”

“Oh shut up! You may not think so, but not just any idiot can do the patrolling around here. Plus, the Demon King’s army has been making some strange movements around here recently. Just the other day, a band of red-eyed zombies and golems were seen loitering near the village...”

Bukkorori said that as he handed over the key to Yunyun.

After confirming that there weren’t any other members of the Defence Corps around, she came closer to the bars.

“...So what exactly happened last night?”

“I was upset that you stole a victory over me, so I went out to vent my frustrations.”

Yunyun bent over and took a closer look at Megumin’s sulking face.

“Hmm...”

“What with that ‘hmm...’? If you have something to say then just say it.”

Yunyun somehow looked both displeased yet a little happy when she heard the reply.

“Not particularly. It’s just, I noticed this after spending all this time with you, but your

eyes turn blue whenever you tell a lie. Did you know that? I wonder if it's a rare Crimson Demon trait."

"Wait, really!? This is the first I've heard about it! So you're saying that I'm special even amongst Crimson Demons? Am I the chosen one!?"

As Megumin was panicking and fussing around, Yunyun opened the door to our cell entered.

"You're normally pretty sharp, so try not to get fooled so easily."

"Why is Yunyun calling me a fool... You tricked me! You're trying to make a fool of me again! Kazuma, please look into my eyes!"

"Hmm? What's the matter? Well, I don't mind looking if you ask me to."

While Yunyun was listening to our little exchange, Megumin said,

"Kazuma, did you know that on the bodies of Crimson Demons, you can find strips of lines that people call a barcode? By the way, Yunyun's is located in a very risque part of her inner thighs... So how was it? Did my eyes turn blue or are they still red?"

"What are you suddenly saying! Normally, you would say an obvious lie in such a situation, right!?"

"It's red like always. So that means you're speaking the truth, right?"

Being on the receiving end of Megumin's comeback, Yunyun is now covering her blushing face.

Megumin just can't be beaten when it comes to instigating others or arguments.

"I feel so much better now. So, what did you come here for? Don't tell me your true nature as a loner was exposed and everyone left you?"

"What are you saying! I... I'm still fine... I think... Wait, that's not it!"

Yunyun went towards Megumin and crouched down with her hands on her knees.

"Let me see your Adventurer Card."

She bluntly said and held out her hand. It's like her usual mature demeanour has completely disappeared.

"No way. Why do I have to show my card to my rival? Besides, being a loner has its limits, you know. Just because you're lonely doesn't mean you should willingly go with others into a jail cell."

"That's not it! Even I wouldn't do that! Just show me the exterminated monsters part. You don't have anything to hide, do you?"

As expected of someone who's been with Megumin since childhood.

She seemed to have somehow guessed what we got up to last night.

"I have nothing to hide, but I'm still not showing it to you! It's not like I hunted the onion ducks that Bukkorori was carefully raising just to get some experience points."

"You just said something that I can't ignore! Hey, did you hunt them!? Bukkorori-san was carefully raising those ducks for Soketto because she was treating him coldly recently. Hey, did you!?"

Come to think of it, she was bragging that her level raised after returning to the village, wasn't she?

"Argh! That doesn't really matter, just show me your card! Hey, the Bomber Majin was really there, right? And you hunted it together with Kazuma-san, right?"

"What are you suddenly saying? There's no way we would hunt something like that. You know it won't attack Crimson Demons, right? If I wanted to go Ninin hunting, I would have taken another Crimson Demon with me instead."

But Yunyun continued looking at her with a questioning gaze.

"Even though you keep saying that the explosions are the fault of the Bomber Majin?"

"The ones causing those explosions everyday was me."

As Megumin stubbornly held her ground, Yunyun sighed.

"...Did you feel like you lost to me because I was able to complete the three trials of the

Crimson Demons and became the next chief in line?”

“I don’t know what you are talking about. I’m the worst mage of the Crimson Demons, so I wouldn’t be qualified to compete you in the first place. Isn’t this good for you? Everyone in the village will be fawning all over you.”

Yunyun was already regarded highly after what happened back with Silvia, but it’s really increased after passing the trial. It looks like she’ll definitely be able to break free from being a loner.

I’m sure she’ll have nothing but happy days ahead of her in this village.

“...Megumin, you’re going back to Axel, aren’t you?”

“But of course. I’m the strongest mage of Axel after all. If I disappear, the citizens of Axel will be troubled.”

“Weren’t you just saying earlier that you were the worst mage of the Crimson Demons? And now you’re the strongest mage of Axel?”

I shot back on reflex, but it seems like Megumin was pretending she didn’t hear that.

“Yunyun, from now on, you’ll be staying in the village to learn how to manage it, right? Then, I guess this is our goodbye.”

...Oh yeah. The reason why Yunyun kept challenging Megumin for the title of the strongest mage of the Crimson Demons was to become the next chief.

Now that she has officially achieved that, there’s no longer any reason for her to return to Axel.

“...Don’t think you’ve won with just this.”

“...I just don’t get this girl. Aren’t you the one that won?”

For some reason, they are both stubbornly insisting that the other won.

If you look at a different perspective, you could say Megumin is stronger and Yunyun is weaker.

You could also look at it the other way around, that Megumin is weak and Yunyun has a surprisingly strong spirit when push comes to shove.

They differ in a lot of ways. Whether it is the families they came from, their personalities, or even their physical build.

For such complete opposites to become rivals could be said to be nature taking its course.

I couldn't help but let out a wry smile.

"Since you're a loner without any party members or a man, I don't mind letting you have this victory. It's our last duel, after all."

Megumin rested her head on my shoulders as she said that.

"...Hey, are you going to keep bragging about Kazuma-san to me until I get a boyfriend? Having a boyfriend isn't that big of a deal, you know!"

"True. Let's just call it my loss. I'm going to be building my own little bundle of happiness with this man here, so Yunyun, please continue working to be the strongest mage. The job of the chief seems pretty tough, but take care not to neglect finding a boyfriend."

Megumin showed her an innocent smile and wrapped her arm around mine.

"Isn't becoming the strongest mage your dream!? And you were the one who called me a pervert and what not every time I brought up the topic of love!"

Yunyun who was so calm a short while ago is now on the verge of tears.

"Kazuma, should I give you a lap pillow? It's the least I could do after making you spend your time here with me. Please use my lap instead of the cold floor of this cell."

"Ok, I'll do that."

“Hey, why are you just naturally giving him a lap pillow? You weren’t that close before right!?”

As I wholeheartedly accepted Megumin’s offer, Yunyun suddenly stood up.

“What’s the matter, Yunyun whom I lost to? That aside, we’re finally alone together here, so could you not bother us? You already have people who’re fawning over you after becoming a chief, right? Why don’t you spend your time with them instead?”

“Mmm, it’s really smooth and feels really good. I didn’t work that hard yesterday for nothing.”

“Hey Megumin, isn’t your face getting red!? You’re not really used to doing these things, right!? You’re just putting up with Kazuma’s sexual harassment, right!?”

I started caressing Megumin’s thighs, but, perhaps it’s because of Yunyun’s presence, Megumin didn’t seem to be the slightest bit angry at all.

“This much is just normal, right?... Ka-Kazuma, I don’t think your face is suppose to be facing that way... No, I’m not embarrassed. I just thought Kazuma would have a hard time breathing like that.”

“Issh ohhkay.”

“Is that so!? Oh, alright, lap pillows can be done like this too!”

“Megumin, you’re definitely putting up with it, aren’t you!? And Kazuma-san, cut it out already!”

Part 5

—A short while after Yunyun left to meet her parents, we were released from jail...

“Seriously Kazuma! And you too Megumin! Will the two of you die if you don’t cause some kind of trouble!? You really should learn a little more from me and my perfect conduct!”

“It’s just as Aqua said, Kazuma. It’s already too late for Megumin, but why did you join her too?”

Unreasonable as it may seem, we’re currently being lectured by the two drunkards that got wasted last night.

“Don’t get ahead of yourselves! Stop showing me such smug smiles just because you didn’t happen to cause any trouble this time! Megumin and I were out doing vigorous night exercises while you two were sleeping last night, you know!?”

“Please pay a little more attention to your phrasing! It’s not what you’re thinking, all we did was run away from the monsters that chased after us in the forest!”

Megumin desperately tried to correct me.

“Listen up, I really showed my stuff last night. I handled that One Strike bear easily, and I schooled that Fenrir so hard that I took pity on it and let it go. Isn’t that right, Megumin?”

“...Well, you’re not lying but...”

Darkness had a look of doubt in her face.

“The One-Strike bear aside, isn’t a Fenrir a monster on the same level as a calamity? You’re saying that a monster that fearsome is living in the woods this close to the village?”

Come to think of it, the Bomber Majin should have also been living much deeper in the forest as well.

“I see, that’s definitely the work of the Demon King’s Army. A Demon King’s General that can command monsters is planning to throw the world into chaos. That’s definitely it! It’s my goddess’s intuition!”

Aqua came to this absurd conclusion without any shred of logic whatsoever, but this case is just full of mysteries.

There was also the question of why the Ninin wasn’t fighting at full efficiency.

Still, we’ve completed everything we’ve set out to do.

All that's left is to get Yunyun to send us back to Axel with Teleport.

"Now that I think about it, don't you have to say your goodbyes to the other villagers before we go, Megumin? Yunyun's going to be staying here after sending us back, so it'd difficult to come back here afterwards."

Megumin huffed in response to Darkness's words.

"There's no need to say any goodbyes to those people who called me, the number one genius of the Crimson Demons, stuff like Joke Mage, Worst Mage and Explosion Mage. I'll triumphantly return after defeating the Demon King and have them prostrate themselves before me."

"Explosion Mage fits you just fine though."

And I'm not going off to defeat the Demon king.

Come to think of it...

"Hey Aqua, what did you do with the Tranquility Girl seedling? Before I knew it, it had already disappeared from the pot."

"I already planted it, of course."

Aqua lazily replied. Did she have enough time to do that?

"It's a little weird coming from me considering I was out in the forest last night too, but were you really able to plant it out in that dangerous forest by yourself?"

"What are you saying? Of course not. I just planted it in Megumin's backyard."

"What did you do?"

Megumin reflexively said, but really, what did this girl do?

"Now, now, listen to me. Komekko told me she'll look after it until it grows up. She's a sharp kid, so I don't think she's going to raise it in a bad way. There aren't any other kids around here that are the same age as her, so they'll make good friends!"

"That girl probably intends to eat it after it grows up."

“Just what’s wrong with your family? I’m going to go take it back right now.”

I caught onto Aqua before she could run away in a panic.

“Megumin’s just joking around with you. Yunyun is going to come back soon, so just sit still.”

“...Yeah, of course it’s a joke. Seriously, Megumin! Is messing with me that fun? When we get back to Axel, I’ll reveal to everyone just how much of a siscon you are... Hey Megumin, it was a joke, right? Why are you keeping silent? Why won’t you meet my eyes?”

Just as Aqua started shaking Megumin by the shoulders...

“Megumin!”

Yunyun came to a stop in front of us, panting heavily.

She must have ran all the way out here.

Still, she had a wide smile when she looked up.



“What’s the matter Yunyun? I get that you’re in high spirits because you finally made some friends in the village, but if you’re too eager, they’ll get fed up with you.”

“That’s not it! Also, tell me those kind of things earlier! Yesterday, and today too... I think I’ve already been too eager!”

Yunyun coughed multiple times as she tried to catch her breath.

“I’ll go back to Axel with you!”

Yunyun, her eyes glowing vividly, joyfully declared.

“I’m going to try and defeat the Demon King too! I don’t want a victory handed over to me like this... I’ll defeat the Demon King. And once I’ve achieved that, I’ll officially become the chief! I’ve already talked this over with my father and everyone in the village!”

Megumin’s rival, opponent, and above all, her best friend, said with an unblemished smile. It’s as if a weight was lifted off her shoulders.

“...Is that so. You’re finally a riajuu now, but I guess you’ll go back to being a loner after all... Oh, and, the one who will defeat the Demon King is me. “

Megumin dismissed her rival’s declaration just like that.

However, I know that she’s just tsundere towards Yunyun.

Despite her attempts to keep a calm facade, her cheeks were twitching out of happiness.

“You just can’t be honest, can you? Your eyes are bright red, you know?”

The intensity of a Crimson Demon’s emotions are shown through their eyes.

“You just can’t take a hint, can you, Aqua? Fine, let me go pull up that Tranquility Girl you so selfishly planted in my yard!”

Aqua tightly grabbed onto Megumin’s waist before she could leave. Megumin, on the other hand, quickly continued to hide her embarrassment.

“Come on, Yunyun, if you’re going back to Axel, then hurry up and get ready. Also, I don’t think you’ve noticed this, but the adventurers in that town are surprisingly reliant on you. If you asked them to let you into their party, they’ll probably end up fighting over you.”

“Really!? Hey, why didn’t you tell me something this important before!?”

“If you ended up making a lot of friends in that town, you would get attached to that town and give up on becoming the chief, wouldn’t you?”

“Of course I would!”

Yunyun instantly replied.

“At least think it over for a while. Seriously. Anyway, let’s hurry up and head back to our town.”

“I-I get it so don’t rush me!... But, is what you said earlier true? That the adventurers in Axel are, umm, reliant on me...”

“Surprisingly. I said surprisingly. If you get too carried away, you’ll return to being a loner.”

Even though Megumin was saying such things, Yunyun couldn’t hide the grin on her face.

“Haa... I was able to win against Megumin and the villagers also accepted me. This all feels like a dream...”

“What do you mean win against me? Now that you’re going back to Axel, there’s no way I would just give you that victory!”

“Hey, what are you saying now? I cleared the three trials of the Crimson Demons, so doesn’t that make it my victory this time? You’re just being a sore loser!”

I know I said they were polar opposites earlier, but they’re surprisingly pretty similar in some aspects.

After getting into another childish argument, the two of them started squaring each other up...

“If you’re going to take it that far, then let’s have a match, Megumin! I’ll definitely make you admit defeat this time!”

Yunyun declared as she took the wand from her hip.

In response to that, Megumin took out her Adventurer Card.

“Oh look, my card was in a place like this. Weren’t you asking me to show you the exterminated monsters part earlier? Look! The name of the Bomber Majin is right here-”

“How could you change your stance that quickly!”

In the middle of the square of the Crimson Demon village, Yunyun’s scream echoed-

Chapter 5

And thus begins this Legend

Part 1

After returning to Axel and bidding farewell to Yunyun, instead of heading back to the mansion, we headed straight for the Adventurer's guild.

"To think that you actually defeated Moguninnin while I wasn't there. But we are party mates, so you'll split the money even if I was sleeping back then, right?"

Aqua said in high spirits.

She seemed to have completely forgotten about how she was lecturing us just a moment ago.

"W-Well, I didn't expect that you really only did vigorous exercises last night. Sorry for doubting you, Megumin, Kazuma. Oh, I know! Aqua, why don't we buy some high quality ingredients and throw a party for them to celebrate their accomplishments!?"

"It's not a problem at all. I actually think it's a wonderful idea, especially coming from the usually hardheaded Darkness."

Perhaps feeling indebted to Megumin and me, Darkness maintained a smile on her face despite being called hardheaded by Aqua.

"So, Megumin, what do you think? Whose portion do you think we should draw the money to buy the high class ingredients from?"

"Yeah, seriously! After knowing me for so long, you two should know very well that I wouldn't cause trouble just to fulfill my desire to cast Explosions."

"As if." x3

"Kazuma, whose side are you on?"

Leaving Megumin who was starting to get agitated behind, I quickly made my way to the receptionist.

“Yo, Onee-san, it’s the large bounty hunter, Satou Kazuma.”

“Ah, Satou-san! What brings you here today?”

I showed her the card I got from Megumin...

“I did it again, onee-san. Seriously... If we keep going on at this pace, we’ll wipe out all the large bounty targets in no time at all. This will put all the other adventurers out of business, haha!”

“H-Hahaha... So you defeated the Bomber Majin Moguninnin, I see. Congratulations, I’ll go prepare the bounty immediately!”

That onee-san doesn’t even seem surprised anymore when we turn up with the head of yet another bounty.

However, I don’t particularly mind her current reaction.

If you have to ask why, well...

“Umm... Could you be Satou Kazuma-sama?”

A voice called out to me at the absolute perfect time.

Standing next to me was a beautiful lady with an air of maturity about her and a beauty spot under her eye.

She had a body that could give Darkness a run for her money, being round in all the right places.

Her neatly cut black hair extended to her shoulders, and her erotic black eyes were staring right at me.

Just meeting her gaze made my heart skip a beat.

Is she a priest, I wonder?

She was wearing a white robe that seemed reminiscent of a cleric's garb, and a mace hung upon her waist.

Is it her beauty spot that gave me the impression of a cool mature beauty?

Or is it because there was almost no one amongst the women around me that could be considered mature?

The woman in question gave me an elegant bow.

"I have heard a lot about you... I've been awaiting your arrival. My name is Serena... I hope this is not too sudden, but is there any chance you're willing to let me join your party?"



She must be the fan that the receptionist told me about before I left for the Crimson Demon Village.

The guild fell silent in response to her sudden words.

“Huh? What are you saying? This party already has an excellent Archpriest, so there’s no need for another priest. Now go away. Shoo, shoo.”

Aqua’s aggressive words echoed throughout the otherwise silent guild.

It seems like she’s wary of having her position stolen with the appearance of another priest.

“Satou Kazuma-sama, would you please consider allowing me to become one of your retainers? I swear that I will not become a burden upon you.”

Serena, on the other hand, completely ignored Aqua and addressed me with a smile.

Megumin, who seemed like she was about to angrily say something, suddenly averted her gaze.

I’m sure she couldn’t bear to say anything after causing so much trouble in the Crimson Demon Village.

Everyone’s gaze naturally swivelled to me.

I’m sure they are waiting for my response, but this development is definitely—

“You must be some underling of the Demon King, right? You want to join my party? There is no one in their right mind who would want to join my party after learning of my infamy. Yup, your true identity is an assassin sent by the Demon King who judged me as a threat after taking out so many of his Generals—”

“Sacred Highness Heal!!”

I was suddenly interrupted by Aqua’s spell.

A gentle light enveloped my body, and faded away without anything happening.

If I recall, it’s a powerful healing spell that cures not just physical wounds but also any

other effects that are adversely affecting my body.

But, obviously, I wasn't hurt at all.

"...Hey, why did you just cast a recovery spell on me?"

"You who has low stats, low levels and the weakest class seem to be under the delusion that the Demon King has placed a mark upon you, so I casted heal on your mind."

Maybe I really should trade her away.

"To think they would doubt you so... Kazuma-sama, I believe that evaluation to be far below your actual skills. As a great adventurer who has defeated so many tough enemies and acquired vast amounts of wealth at a young age, you might very well be the hero chosen by the goddess to defeat the Demon King..."

Serena clasped her hands together and closed her eyes as if she was in prayer as she said that.

Well, the goddess Aqua did send me here to aid in the fight against the Demon King that's currently threatening this world...

Actually, now that I think about it, yeah, I really should be viewed more favourably—

"Sacred Highness Heal!!"

Aqua's voice interrupted again.

This time, the soft light enveloped Serena.

"...Why did you cast recovery magic on me?"

"You were calling our Kazuma a hero or whatever, so I thought to cast heal on your brain."

.....

"Ahem. Anyway, I'm really loathe to say this, but she's technically our party's priest.

Sorry, but we are not currently looking for additional party members right now. Could you please look elsewhere?"

"Ouch! Ouch! It hurts! Kazuma-san, it really hurts!"

I pulled upon Aqua's ears as I said that.

However, Serena's smile didn't falter in the slightest.

"...I suppose that can't be helped. I'll excuse myself here. However, Kazuma-sama. If you allow me to join your party, I'm certain I'll be of great help to you."

After saying such words, Serena confidently walked away.

As I was seeing her off, I took a close look at my current party members.

There's Aqua who's currently crying tears of pain and struggling within my grip.

There's Megumin, who popped her head out from behind Darkness and heaved a sigh of relief upon seeing Serena leave.

And lastly...

"...Why are you fidgeting?"

"Seeing Kazuma get led away by a beautiful priest who appeared out of nowhere... I thought this must be what NTR feels like..."

There's Darkness, fidgeting and looking at me with moist eyes while sporting a smile that hid both arousal and shame.

The more I looked at my current companions...

"...Say, can I go chase after her?"

Part 2

Next morning.

Something felt different from usual as we entered the guild.

“Now then, everyone who’s going out for the extermination quests, please line up here. I’ll be casting long duration support magic on you...”

The adventurers were forming neat lines in the guild.

And at the head of the line was Serena, casting support magic on each of them free of charge.

Generally speaking, priests are very high in demand, but very few people have the aptitude for the class.

Thus, offering to cast support magic for free is a very valuable service for those parties without priests of their own.

“Oh, Kazuma-sama. How about it, would you like to have me cast support magic on you too? Support spells cast by different sects will stack. I believe I’m of a different sect from your priest, so our spells should stack with each other.”

Serena greeted me with a smile upon spotting me.

I’m surprised that she could state that so confidently.

...Though, I suppose it’s pretty obvious that Aqua is of the Axis Cult.

Still, offering to cast support spells for free... It feels like this is the first time I’ve seen a proper priest.

“Hey, you’re going to cause problems for the other priests if you do that without consulting us. The goodwill towards us is already quite thin, so stop doing such things.”

Our party’s delinquent... no, wait.

Our party’s priest (tentative) shot towards Serena.

The actual priest glanced at Aqua out of the corner of her eye and said,

“It’s better to refrain from that sort of behaviour. Otherwise, Kazuma-sama’s reputation will be dragged through the mud. Is it because of you that Kazuma-sama has such a bad reputation?... Plus, is it wrong to offer a helping hand to parties without priests?”

“It is not wrong.”

The goddess (tentative) couldn’t disagree with Serena’s reasoning.

“I won’t ask you to cast support magic free of charge to everyone. Even though you’re a far stronger priest than I am, I won’t reproach you for not supporting the other adventurers in the past... However, my actions do not bring inconvenience upon anyone. This is the proper thing to do. I do not believe that you have the right to put a stop to that.”

“...Yes.”

Aqua looked towards the ground and muttered, completely unable to come up with a retort.

“...I admit defeat...”

What’s a goddess doing losing to a priest?

As I looked upon Serena, she noticed my gaze and smiled back.

...No matter how you look at it, Serena definitely seems more priest-like.

Just then.

“...I don’t like this.”

The one who suddenly said that was the actual, true blooded delinquent, Dust.

The person in question was lazing around on top of his table as he stared at Serena with a suspicious gaze.

“I don’t like this... I’ve never seen such a priest-like priest before... The others might

have fallen for your wiles with a simple support spell, but you can't fool me that easily. As far as abilities go, Aqua onee-san who revived me before should have the upper hand. I stand on her side... I don't like this. I don't like this at all..."

An honest person with a pure heart seems to be an incompatible existence to this twisted man.

I wonder why is he on such good terms with me?

Still, there are quite a few people in the guild who have great trust in Aqua.

After all, they've known Aqua for far longer than some priest who appeared out of nowhere.

Just then, the guild staff started addressing the adventurers.

"All adventurers, I hope you'll work hard on the extermination quests today! Now then, today's situation is somewhat different..."

It seemed like they were waiting for Serena to finish casting her support magic on everyone.

For some reason, the guild staff didn't busy themselves with the usual tasks putting up the requests on the noticeboard.

Instead, they took out a single piece of paper.

"The truth is, last night, a large outbreak of undead appeared near the public cemetery, so we would like you all to focus on exterminating them today. It's fairly close to the town, so there's no telling when the citizens will be threatened. In particular, we request all priests to please take part in this extermination."

...A large outbreak of undead in the public cemetery.

Darkness's, Megumin's, and my gazes naturally fell upon Aqua.

Aqua's supposed to be in charge of purifying the cemetery...

"What? Why is everyone looking at me like that!? I properly purify the graveyard every week! I didn't slack off this time!"

“...Didn’t you slack off before?...”

My doubtful gaze merely intensified in the face of Aqua’s desperate excuses.

“Hey, don’t look at me like that! I properly did my work this time! It’s not a lie! Fine, just you wait! I’ll show you what an Archpriest can really do! Just me alone is enough to deal with Zombies and Skeletons!”

Almost as if a fire was lit under her, Aqua loudly declared to the guild.

Part 3

“What the hell is this!?”

Someone shouted.

Public cemetery.

This is a place where those without much cash or adventurers who have no known relatives end up getting buried.

That large patch of ground a short distance away from the town is currently swarming with a couple hundred undead.

Faced with a horde far beyond what any of them have expected, the other adventurers wrinkled their faces and cowered.

No, it’s not because they are scared.

It’s currently cloudy.

That said, even if it’s cloudy, there’s no need to fear fighting the undead in the middle of the day.

There’s no need, but...

“...S-Say... Can I go home?”

“Y-You can’t, Kazuma. I too really want to go home in the face of this stench, but I need to show off my cool side here. Afterwards, everyone will once again think that, yeah, the beautiful priest of Axel really is Aqua-sama after all.”

You say that again, but they never thought that of you in the first place.

The main problem is that it stinks.

It really stinks out here.

With this many zombies gathered in one spot, the foul odours they emit is the stuff of legends.

“Oh well, go get them, Aqua. If you charge right into them, the undead will all gather around you. Just get them all with a large area purification spell.”

“Eh!? I really don’t want to be surrounded by an undead horde this large...”

“Then, leave this to me...”

Looking at the hesitant Aqua, Megumin started chanting before Darkness grabbed her from behind.

“Right, Darkness, continue to hold Megumin down. We can’t have her blow away the entire cemetery with them. Now, Aqua, let’s go!”

All the adventurers apart from us were kept at bay by the horrendous odours, so no one approached the horde of zombies.

Some of them were attacking from range with projectiles and magic, but those don’t seem to be particularly effective.

I grabbed onto Aqua and started closing the distance to that horde of zombies.

They should come charging at us once they spot us.

“Hey- Darkness, please let go of me! It would feel really amazing to fire an Explosion right into that horde! At this rate, Aqua would just purify them all! My Explosion will properly take care of them!”

“You’ll properly take care of the entire cemetery too! As a Crusader, there’s no way I’ll just stand by and let you destroy the cemetery!”

As Megumin and Darkness argued behind me, Aqua and I steadily got closer to the zombie horde.

Trusting in Aqua’s abilities as an Archpriest, the other adventurers backed me up, swinging their weapons around in the general direction of the horde.

But in the face of that provocation and Aqua’s special trait of attracting undead...

“...Huh?”

“...They aren’t coming towards me at all.”

The undead horde only retaliated against the adventurers who were attacking them.

“What, could it be that your slim glimmer of divinity has finally gone out?”

“Do you want me to deliver divine punishment upon you, you shitty NEET!? You’ll definitely fall to hell after you die!”

I mentioned offhandedly, and Aqua snapped back.

“If I fall to hell, I’ll just have a party with Vanir and the others.”

“Why do you have such a disgustingly large network!? How vexing!”

After saying that, Aqua finally got to work.

She might act this way, but she’s still technically a goddess.

I like to call her the goddess of toilets or party goddess and such, but her abilities are top notch.

Just hearing her start chanting is enough to put a relieved expression on the surrounding adventurers.

And then, when she finished chanting,

“Turn undead!”

Along with Aqua’s voice, the entire cemetery was bathed in a soft light originating from Aqua.

The undead that came into contact with that light...

“Huh?”

Aqua and I said at the same time.

The undead didn’t seem to be affected by that light at all.

They must have taken that light as an attack.

All of them turned their attention towards Aqua...

“HAAAAAH!? Aqua, isn’t dealing with undead is your only strong point!? D-Do something about this!”

“This is strange! This is really strange! Huh? These guys might not be undead after all! I’ve never seen red-eyed zombies before! And, wait, Kazuma, why are you distancing yourself from me!? Aren’t we party members? Aren’t we friends!?”

Aqua grabbed onto my clothes with a death grip as I tried to escape.

After seeing Aqua’s attacks bounce off, the adventurers who were calmly watching from the sidelines started panicking too.

Just then,

“Turn Undead!”

Serena's voice echoed throughout the area.

At the same time, a shockwave-like wind expanded from her.

The horde of undead collapsed like puppets with their strings cut the moment they came into contact with the shockwave.

“Ooooh!”

The adventurers on the sidelines let out a cheer.

The large horde of undead that were clogging up the cemetery were reduced to unmoving corpses with a single spell.

—The extermination quest ended up being over in a snap.

The guild expected it to take the better part of the day, so they didn't make any preparations for any other extermination requests today.

Thus, all the adventurers essentially had nothing to do after noon.

And, those people who received an unexpected day off...

“Oh, my, you're really amazing. Would you like to join our party? We do have an advanced class amongst us. Just the one, though.”

“No, no, join my party! Our party has quite a few accomplishments, you know!?”

“Please join our party! Our party is all female, so you can put your mind at ease!”

“...No, um... I have my sights set on joining Kazuma-sama's party, so...”

At the centre of the guild, a somewhat troubled looking Serena is being surrounded by pretty much all the adventurers.

Why did Serena's spell work on those zombies while Aqua's failed to affect them?

It's still a mystery to me now, but I know one thing for sure...

“Now, now, I’ll throw this pinecone into that cup on the table. Then, from the cup...”

“You know, I don’t think your tricks would really work right now.”

Aqua was setting up some kind of party trick, but everyone was too busy welcoming Serena to even give her the time of day.

“...From the cup... high quality matsutake mushrooms will... shoot up...”

Her voice steadily grew smaller.

“...one after another... They’ll grow from the cup...”

Getting absolutely no attention from anyone, Aqua gloomily threw the pinecone into the cup.

And from the cup grew...

“...Hey, how did you do that? Having freshly grown matsutake mushrooms growing in this season is really odd. And there’s even a second and third shoot...”

After grabbing the first mushroom that grew from the cup, a second and third one quickly sprouted out to replace it, but...

Aqua wordlessly flopped onto the table and stopped moving entirely.

Megumin gently patted Aqua on the head.

Darkness was standing next to the table with her hand against her chin, seemingly deep in thought.

“—Still, is this really okay, Serena-san? This extermination was pretty much handled entirely by you alone, so giving up all of the rewards to spread amongst ourselves...”

A certain adventurer is saying that to Serena.

“I’m clergy. As long as I have enough to pay for food and shelter, that’s more than enough.”

Watching Serena say that with a smile, the adventurers let out a sigh.

A beautiful lady with a great figure, a great personality and high skills as a priest.

“.....”

I looked away from Serena to Aqua, still motionlessly flopped over the table.

“...Hey, you’re losing, you know? Is that really okay?”

“.....Leave me alone. I’m the goddess of a minor cult. It’s fine if I can’t become a major goddess, I’ll just look over those who worship me fervently. That delinquent Dust said it earlier, didn’t he? That’ll he is on my side? There might not be many of them, but there are people who’re supporting me. That’s why I don’t feel like I lost...”

“I thought you were different from the moment I laid eyes on you! Unlike a certain disappointing Archpriest, you truly are a wonderful person! Especially how you don’t lust after money!”

The voice of a certain delinquent could be heard by Serena’s side.

Being always troubled by matters of money, he seemed to have completely defected over side after receiving a large payout.

“...He’s saying that sort of things, you know?”

“...Say, Kazuma-san... Kazuma-san, you’ll always be on my side, right?”

Aqua started softly sniffing.

Part 4

It’s been quite some time since Serena came to this town.

“Serena-san, I got a couple of scrapes while out on a subjugation quest. Could you heal it?”

“Sure, that’s not a problem. Could you show me the wound?”

“Serena-san, please do me next!”

“Serena-san is like a real goddess!”

Inside the bar of the adventurer’s guild.

Wounded adventurers gathered around the table that has more or less been given over to Serena.

“This is so vexing...”

Aqua, who entered the staff section of the receptionist table without permission, poked her head out from behind the counter.

“Aqua-san, it’s quite troubling for you to keep coming over here...”

The receptionist onee-san warned, but Aqua didn’t react at all.

The other staff members looked over to me, silently pleading for me to do something.

“...Aqua, you’re in the way over there, and I’m pretty sure everyone’s already noticed you, so come on out already.”

“...How dare that woman steal away my popularity. It should’ve been me who is getting fawned over by the adventurers as the goddess of healing.”

—Have you actually done anything like that in the past?

Darkness said she had something to look into and vanished early this morning together with Megumin.

And it’s not just today. They’ve been doing this ever since Serena arrived in this town.

As for me, I was ambushed by Aqua while lazing around the mansion and got forcibly dragged along...

“You know, you’re not going to find a weakness to exploit no matter how long you spend stalking her, so let’s just go home and sleep.”

Well, in short, that’s why she’s here.

Despite by exasperation, Aqua stubbornly refused to step out from behind the counter.

"No way. In the first place, she really grates on me. She's way too perfect. She's beautiful with a great body, charitable personality, and kind to everyone. And she's a pretty powerful priest on top of that. She's way too perfect. Yeah, it's like she's on the same level of perfect as me or Eris."

"I'm not going to dignify that."

I looked over to Serena as she treated the adventurers.

When she noticed my gaze, Serena returned with a smile and a cheery wave.

The adventurers crowded around her patiently waited in line for their turn.

Actually, most of them barely had anything more serious than scratches, and some of them were even just here as fans.

"Hey, Kazuma, I have something to ask of you."

Aqua suddenly said, standing up from the counter.

She then thrust her finger at me.

"Could you prick my finger with your dagger? I'm going to go get treated by her."

"...You can heal it yourself, can't you? What, you going to go pick a fight? You really shouldn't. At the end of the day, she's very highly regarded amongst the adventurers right now. If you do anything untoward to her, you'll be making an enemy out of the entire guild."

I tried to warn Aqua, but she wouldn't have any of it.

With her finger still pointed directly at my face, I reluctantly took out my dagger...

"...Hey, you were the one who came up with this, so stop moving your finger."

"It's still scary. It's might not be much, but it's still my own blood. Make sure you just prick it a little. Just a little."

Aqua's finger was wriggling all over the place as she tried to dodge my dagger.

Perhaps to calm her own nerves, she grabbed her right hand with her left and steadied her finger.

Just why is she going so far, I wonder? Carefully, I brought my dagger to her fingertip...

"Oh, my finger has disappeared~! Which one are you supposed to stab, I wonder?"

Aqua cheerfully said that and covered her finger just before my dagger made contact.

I wordlessly shoved the tip of my dagger into her hand.

"...!...!"

Aqua recoiled, covering the wound with her hand, barely making a sound due to the pain.

"There, now get going."

At my words, Aqua glared at me through tearful eyes before lumbering over to Serena.

—As she went, for some strange reason, Aqua began stumbling and moving strangely.

It felt a little like she was pretending to be drunk.

Then, as she approached the adventurer at the front of the line,

"Sorry. As you can see, I'm heavily injured... Could you let a weak and injured young girl go first?"

Wait, so she was trying to act the part of a heavily wounded person?

The adventurer being addressed turned and frowned.

"No, wait, you can heal your wounds by... Okay, I get it. I get it, so stop threatening me with those weird movements!"

He fearfully said before giving up his spot to Aqua.

“Please wait a moment.”

The adventurer was stopped by Serena.

And Serena stared at Aqua...

“I don’t know why you won’t just heal your wounds yourself, but... But aren’t you a priest? Healing the wounds of others is supposed to be your job, so what are you trying to do by pushing someone else aside so you could be healed first? Don’t you think that’s not something a priest should do?”

“...I do...”

Serena launched into a lecture, and Aqua obediently agreed.

Of course, there’s no way she can argue against that.

“I’m not saying that I won’t heal you just because you are a priest, but everyone else is suffering too. So, please properly follow the line, okay?”

“Yes. I’m sorry.”

After apologizing to the adventurer, Aqua obediently went over to the end of the line.

...Seriously, how’s a goddess getting lectured by a priest?

After a short time, it finally became Aqua’s turn.

She took at seat in front of Serena and showed her the wound on her right hand.

“Sensei, a passing shitty NEET dealt a serious wound on me. Can you heal it? Or am I going to die from this wound?”

Serena took that hand into her own and let out a small chuckle.

“It’s just a small scratch. I’ll heal it right away... Heal!... There, now it’s fine...”

As she removed her hand, Aqua’s wound was still bleeding without any sign of being healed at all.

“...!?”

Serena seemed taken back upon seeing it, and Aqua started crying.

Well, I say that, but it’s fairly obvious that she’s forcing herself.

“Sensei, am I really going to die? Is it a wound that even you can’t heal? Or are you not healing me because you dislike me? Just what is happening, Sensei!?”

It seems like she’s resisting Serena’s healing magic.

Yeah, come to think of it, she did the same thing to Wiz back when I was trying to get her to teach me Drain Touch.

If she was able to resist a Lich’s skill, a simple priest would be easily...

“Heal! Heal! What’s going on? It isn’t taking effect...”

“Sensei, why aren’t you healing me? Don’t tell me, you’re not healing me because you’re afraid that I might usurp your popularity and reputation as the number one priest in this guild!? Or can you not heal me because you suck? Aaa...! I’m going to die at this rate! The wound will get infected and I’ll die...! Kazuma-san! Kazuma-san! This woman won’t heal me!”

After she shouted my name across the entire guild, I had no choice but to approach her.

In the first place, poisons won’t work on you, and any germs would get purified upon touching you.

I’d really like to say that to her, but I kept that in my heart.

“If I die, please build me a grave that surpasses even the pyramids in the center of town. Please put all of the treasures in my room that Kazuma has been treating like trash within it. Emperor Zell will be its guardian, and prepare delicious drinks and

snacks three times a day in front of it. On the gravestone, write here lies the great-”

I lightly smacked that stupid head that was loudly spouting stupid things with the pommel of my dagger.

“I’ll write here lies a great idiot. Sorry, Serena-san. Come on, let’s go.”

“...!...!”

I dragged Aqua who was rolling around in pain by the back of her collar and moved to leave.

The gazes of the adventurers around me really hurt.

This is so embarrassing.

Just then-

“Um... Kazuma-sama, there’s something important I’d like to tell you, so may I have a moment of your time?”

Serena called out to me.

Hearing that, Aqua casted heal upon her wound and her head and angrily stood up.

“Hey, give it a rest already! You’re being very persistent to our Kazuma-san! Just stealing the position of the number one beautiful priest in the guild isn’t enough for you, now you want to take away Kazuma-san with your erotic charms too!? Our Kazuma-san is a weak-willed man who’ll easily fall if a girl younger than him were to call him onii-chan, so would you please stop that?”

“Right, get over here, I’ll teach you a lesson.”

Just as I was about to drag Aqua away from the guild, one of the adventurers suddenly said,

“The number one beautiful priest in the guild...”

”Pfft!”

“Who was the one who laughed just now? I can hear you from over here, so come on out! Ah, weren’t you the one I revived some time ago!? If you’re going to laugh, then pay up! Resurrection is originally a super high level spell that demands a large remuneration, so pay up!”

“Hey, it wasn’t me! I didn’t laugh... Hey, don’t put your finger into my beer, Aqua-san... Wait, this is just water! Why did you use my beer for a trick!?”

“It’s not a trick, it’s a property of my body! Fine, I understand you all now! Even after all the support magic and healing and resurrections I provided when you guys were hunting those strong monsters and high bounty targets! Fine, as payment, I’ll turn all the beer in this place into water!”

“Please stop, Aqua-san. If you do that, the guild will be the one most troubled! Please, stop!”

The guild staff and adventurers hastily moved to stop Aqua before she could stick her hand into the wine barrels.



In the midst of that chaos,

“Should we go somewhere else, Kazuma-sama? It’s a little too noisy here. If possible, I would prefer a less crowded place...”

Serena said with a small chuckle, ignoring the current chaos in the guild.

Epilogue

Leaving Aqua who was making a fuss behind, I followed Serena to a more secluded alley quite some distance away from the town centre.

There wasn't much foot traffic around this part of town. The only store around these parts is that unpopular magic item shop.

I would rather have a talk in some cafe somewhere rather than this secluded alley, but...

Perhaps sensing my thoughts, Serena smiled at me.

"What I'm about to tell you isn't something we should be talking about within a store..."

After saying that, she took a look around her surroundings and squatted down.

"People don't often pass through here, and we can easily change topics even if someone stumbles upon us. So, shall we have a little chat?"

She had a serious look on her face that is a stark contrast to the gentle smile she usually puts on.

——What she told me next was a tragic and weighty tale.

It couldn't be easily summarized with the vocabulary that I have.

It's the kind of story that would rend the heart and sap the will of anyone who hears it.

"——And eventually, that person was consumed by evil forces... I don't know when it started, but eventually, the people of the world ended up referring to her by a single name... The Demon King. The Demon King isn't hurting the inhabitants of this world by her own will..."

"How could this be... To think that that sort of manga-like development would actually happen..."

I think I faintly recall reading something like this before.

Serena tilted her head.

“...Manga?... Anyway, because of that, that young girl ended up becoming the Demon King. Her form has been twisted to a truly hideous form by that curse, but it will soon be broken... Please, Kazuma-sama, as the one chosen by the goddess, I’m sure you’re itching to rid the world of the Demon King who has brought so much suffering to mankind. But the Demon King used to be a helpless young girl too! Could you please delay your plans of defeating the Demon King? If you really can’t... If you are truly dead set on defeating the Demon King, then please, allow me join your party and bring me to her...”

She wrapped her hands around mine and looked at me with upturned eyes.

What a dramatic development.

Yes, this is it!

This is the sort of thing I wanted when I came to this world!

Goddesses getting eaten by frogs, Demon King’s Generals who subsists on bread crusts and sugar water.

Chasing down runaway cabbages and working part time as a construction worker even though I’m an adventurer.

Cat-eared orcs and elves with detachable ears, etc, etc

Yes, those were the outliers!

Even in this world, there exists a proper tragic story, an actual fantasy-like development!

Yes, it’s just everyone I’ve met is odd!

“Still, Serena-san, why do you think I’m the one chosen by the goddess? To be frank, taking down all those Generals and high bounty targets is more of a fluke than anything else.”

Serena closed her eyes and quietly shook her head.

“I knew there was something different about you the moment I heard your name, Kazuma-sama. I do not know if you are aware of this, but every so often, beings with special powers will appear in this world. Those powers take the form of skills, of physical attributes, of strange magics and weapons. There’s a large variety of them, but one thing they all have in common is that they all strike fear to those of the Demon King.”

She’s talking about the cheat users who came from Japan.

“Err, well, I do kind of know of them... Anyway, you think I’m one of those guys because of my strange name, right? Well, sorry to say this, but I don’t really have any special-”

“No, it’s not because you have a strange name!”

Serena boldly declared.

“It’s true, those who possess such special powers tend to have strange names. But that’s not what convinced me that you are special. There was once a legendary swordsman who brought much destruction to the Demon King’s forces! The moment I heard your name, I was certain of it! You are his descendant!”

How could this be!?

.....

“...Why do you think so?”

“That person’s name was Satou. Could it really be mere coincidence for someone else to have such a rare name? I do not believe so!”

That’s the most common surname back in my country.

She has completely mistaken me for someone else.

...Though...

“Serena-san, I’m sorry to say this, but it’s the unmistakable truth that I’m an adventurer with the weakest job. The story you just told me was really exciting and all, but, well, it’s impossible for me to defeat the Demon King. I don’t intend to face him in the first place, and even if I did, I don’t have the ability to. Plus, from what you’ve

told me, the curse is going to wear off soon, and the Demon King is just a young girl, right? No, no, that's totally impossible. I don't have the resolve needed to kill a person. Just dealing with humanoid monsters is tough enough as is."

I expected Serena to be disappointed after hearing such pathetic words, but she surprisingly seemed relieved instead.

"You shouldn't be that humble... Still... I see. Fufu, Kazuma-sama is a really kind person, aren't you?"

Serena smiled.

Then, she made a small bow.

"Now then, I shall..."

"Celestina-san! Is that Celestina-san!?"

A sudden voice interrupted Serena's goodbyes.

That person was...

"Ah, Kazuma-san too! What are you two doing in such a place? You really have some kind of fate with the Demon King's Generals. First me and Vanir, and now Celestina-san too! Did you already make friends with her?"

The store owner of the magic item shop nearby, Wiz.

"...Have you mistaken me for someone else? I'm a priest named Serena. I'm sure you've got the wrong person-"

"Celestina-san, you really should visit my store now that you're here. Kazuma-san, you're welcome too. I'll put on some tea."

Wiz simply ignored Serena's attempts to fool her. It's almost like she's a genius when it comes to that.

Serena maintained a smile as she looked towards me.

"Kazuma-sama, do you know her? Could you explain to her that she's got the wrong

person?”

“Why won’t you look at me, Celestina-san? And what’s with that posh way of speaking? You didn’t forget about me, did you? It’s me, Wiz! I lived with you in Demon King-san’s castle way back when! Celestina-san!”

Wiz grabbed Celestina by the shoulder and started shaking her.

Serena, probably up to her limit, pried away Wiz’s hand.

“Would you j-Could you please stop that? I am Serena. That Celes-whatever is a different person, so could you give it a rest?”

“What are you saying? However you look at it, you’re Celestina-san! You’re the Dark Priest Celestina-san! The only human in the Demon King’s army who’s great at scheming and infiltrating-”

“You seem to have split ends. Let me take care of it. Heal! Heal!”

“Ow! Ow! What are you doing, Celestina-san! What is up with you!? Fine, I don’t know you anymore! I thought I’d show you that interesting magic item I just got my hands on... Kazuma-san, do drop by my store soon.”

After bidding me farewell, Wiz stomped away in the direction of her store in a huff.

“...What a strange person. Smokes comes out of her when she gets healed.”

“Well, she is a Lich after all. Though I’m sure you already know that, Celestina-san.”

I returned Serena’s attempts at deceiving me with a smile of my own.

Even so, her smile didn’t falter in the slightest. I kind of admire her determination.

After a short silence, Serena raised her head.

“That’s not it!”

“Oh?”

It doesn't seem like she's given up.

She has gumption, I'll give her that.

"It's true, I'm one of the Demon King's Generals, Celestina. But please hear me out, the story I told you earlier is the truth! I'm actually the Demon King's older sister. In order to save my sister, I had no choice but to join the Demon King's Army! Ah, when I think about her..."

Just then.

Just as Serena was in the midst of her passionate performance, a man appeared behind her.

"What's this about a sister? Boy who's worried if he's actually under a curse that causes something to interfere whenever things start going well. That disappointing storekeeper who merrily bought some trash again told me you were nearby. Moi might be willing to help you with that for a fair price. How about paying the shop a visit?"

Serena stiffened up upon hearing that voice.

After Wiz, yet another one of the Demon King's generals, the Masked Devil Vanir, appeared.

As Serena looked around fearfully, their eyes met.

"...Good afternoon. Nice to meet you. Are you a friend of Kazuma-sama? Um, Kazuma-sama, you seem to be quite busy, so I shall take my..."

"Nice to meet you for the first time, pure and upright priest who's not the slightest bit suspicious. Now, now, there's no need to rush home. As proof of our meeting, and on behalf of the charred and melting shopkeeper, moi shall offer one of the items that shopkeeper so gleefully bought a short while ago for a low price."

Serena let out a relieved sigh at Vanir's words.

Vanir pulled out a small cone shaped object.

“This is today’s recommended item! The best friend of traveling adventurers, the Bug Killerin! Don’t be fooled by its cute name, this is very powerful indeed. It’s a magic item that bestows a powerful death curse upon any creature smaller than a mouse that approaches it. In other words, if you put this under your pillow, you will be able to sleep without worrying about being stung by any annoying insects.”

“Oh?”

Serena and I said at the same time.

There are mosquitoes and the like in this world.

I’m not aching for money, and something like that does sound useful.

However...

“There’s got to be some kind of downside, isn’t there? Like putting that death curse upon humans with a low chance of success or the like?”

“Not at all. It will not have any effect on any creatures larger than a mouse. The only things that will die are creatures smaller than rats.”

Vanir denied my deductions for once.

Could it really be a decent item...?

“What a wonderful item. In other words, if I put that under my pillow, even the swift and glossy black fearsome emperor will die if it gets close. Please give me one...”

“Thank you for your business!”

Seeing Serena happily buy the item, another thought came to me.

“...Say, Vanir, any living thing smaller than a rat that gets close will die, right?”

“Of course.”

Vanir instantly answered.

“...Then, the bacteria living in human’s guts and symbiotes and whatever else will die too?”

“Of course.”

So it really is a piece of trash after all.

She doesn’t know what bacteria or symbiotes are, but Serena must have deduced it was a defective item from my tone.

Serena tried to subtly return it, but...

“Hold on, newly introduced person. Moi treats the personal information of my customers with the utmost respect, but should you return that item, you shall cease to be a customer of mine. Hmm, yes, I see something... The future of someone who will get mauled by the adventurers after a certain masked gentleman reveals all sorts of secret...”

“I’ll buy it! I’ll buy it! How much is it!?”

My condolences.

“Fuhahahaha! Moi is in a very good mood today! After all, the pieces of trash that the defective shopkeeper bought actually was turned into money! Originally, this item goes for 400,000 Eris, but considering it’s our first meeting, and moi’s good mood, moi shall let you have it for 1,200,800 Eris!”

“The price went up you piece of shit! Why do you know exactly how much money I have! Don’t use your all-seeing sight on everything!”

Serena yelled and threw her entire wallet to Vanir.

Her sudden change in tone made her seem like a foul-mouthed adventurer.

“Fuhahahaha! Till we meet again, brat! Oh, and, person whom I just met, your dark emotions are delicious indeed! Most delicious indeed! Fuhahahaha!”

After catching the wallet, Vanir heartily laughed and strolled back towards the shop with a spring in his step.

Watching his retreating figure, the Demon King's general, Celestina, mumbled,

“...My money...”

...My condolences.

Afterword

Thank you very much for buying this volume.

Recently, after my tendency to slack off while working from home was discovered by my editor, I was dragged to Kadokawa's meeting rooms and isolation rooms to work.

I became a writer because I hated commuting every day, so how did it end up like this?

I know, it ended up this way because I didn't work hard. I'm sorry.

Even after becoming a writer, it seems like I've not matured at all from my time as home security.

——In this volume, the two rivals finally reach a conclusion- no, they ended up becoming eternal rivals.

The pair were originally born out of the concept of having two rivals that are complete opposites yet at the same time very similar, so I'm sure they'll keep fighting even as they get along with each other from now on.

And this story finally reaches a high point.

The Demon King's army finally starts moving, a Demon King's General appears in Axel, and Kazuma's daily life will be broken——

Nah, there's no way this series would've such a serious development. Still, please look forward to the next volume.

Now then, I'll put an end to this volume's afterword here. Next up is some advertisements.

The currently on sale "Combatants will be dispatched! Vol 2" has a short story collaboration with Konosuba, so anyone who's interested in that, please don't miss your chance. It'll make the publisher happy too.

Additionally, the Konosuba animated movie has been announced.

This is growing so large that even I don't have much of a feel for it anymore. It is all thanks to everyone's support and the support of those involved in the development. Thank you, thank you...

This volume too was only completed after causing everyone no small amount of trouble.

I keep delaying the manuscript again and again and forcing Mishima-Sensei to complete the illustrations under very tight deadlines. I'm really sorry for that!

I also caused a lot of trouble for I-san in charge, the editors, the designers, the sales people, and a ton of other people as well, but for sticking with me to the end...!

Along with my thanks and apologies to all of them, I would like to express my deepest thanks to everyone who picked up this book!



THE TWO IN
NERIMAKI'S
IMAGINATION

I thought
those two
would end up
in that sort
of relation-
ship!!

AA
340
2018.

NEXT



JUST WHO IS
THAT PRIEST!?

SHE'S A DEMON
KING'S GENERAL.



STEALING MY TITLE
AS THE BEAUTIFUL
PRIEST OF AXEL,
JUST WHO IS THAT
PRIEST!?

SHE'S A DEMON
KING'S GENERAL.



EH!? DON'T TELL ME, IS
SHE AN ASSASSIN HIRED
BY SOMEONE THE
DUSTINESS HOUSE HAS
OFFENDED?

SHE'S A DEMON
KING'S GENERAL.



NEXT VOLUME, THE TOWN OF
AXEL UNDERGOES A CRISIS,
AND FINALLY, A SERIOUS
DEVELOPMENT WILL...!

COMING
SOON!!

THAT AIN'T
HAPPENING.



GIFTING
this **WONDERFUL**
WORLD with **BLESSINGS! 15**



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